The Master Builder: A Study of the Life of The Apostle Paul. By James Mathers

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THE MASTER BUILDER

A STUDY OF THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

BY

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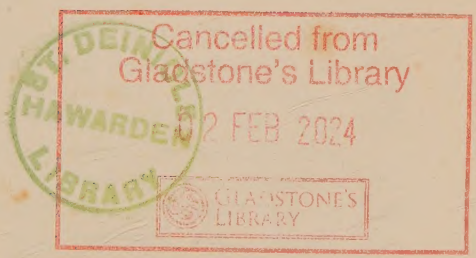
OF BANGALORE, INDIA



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'THE great triumph of Christianity is to produce a few saints. They raise our ideal of humanity. They make us restless and discontented with our own lives, as long as they are lived on a lower plane. They speak to us in language more eloquent than words, "Come up higher."'

'I am gradually finding out how ignorant I am of the meaning of the New Testament, and how miserably I have read my own miserable notions and glosses into the words of St. Paul. I am sure that the solution of the greatest problems which concern humanity is to be found in his Epistles, if we could only approach them without bias and with more childishness.'

'I was thinking to-day that perhaps a man who never wrote letters never could appreciate St. Paul. He was a great letter-writer. Copy him. Read him. Read him fairly quickly. Get into him. Find out his motive power, his real meaning . . . keep reading . . . St. Paul knew so much of God. Read him, and as you read, a greater than St. Paul will come unto you, interpret him, explain him. St. Paul himself will be with you, trying to show you what he meant, and what he had found out that he means now.'

FORBES ROBINSON, *Letters to His Friends.*

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Introduction

I

IN history men are accounted great in proportion to the amount of creative genius that their lives disclose. A general view of history reveals a series of stages in the development of human affairs, which may be distinguished from one another as periods of progress or decline. Every new stage of progress has its leaders, great men in whom the movement seems to take its rise, and through whom mainly it receives its direction. In these men the past and the future meet and are unified. From one point of view, indeed, their lives display a process of selection and a consideration of certain previously existing tendencies, which seem at length to come to a head in the individual, and find a full and consistent expression in his life. But not thus is the great man fully explained. There is inherent in him also a truly creative faculty. Out of the treasure-house of the old he brings something new, something unknown before ; and he thus enriches history with the record of a fresh development of life, which becomes the heritage of the ages to come.

The adequate study of a great man's life, therefore, ought not to be divorced from the study of his historical development and of his social environment. His greatness finds its nurture in these. 'The soil must be ready, the age must contribute the stimulus of its special problems, enthusiasm must be trained to willing service.' This we must always remember. But at the same time we must not forget that the meaning of the great man's life, no less than the range of his activity, can never be limited to what is pre-

supposed in his inheritance and his environment. Training and opportunity do not suffice to explain him. 'He does not merely unify existing tendencies, but brings about an inner transformation : he ennobles the whole message of the age. For it is he who clearly distinguishes the spiritual from the merely human, the eternal from the temporal, who first gives to life an independent worth, a value of its own, who first attains to the conception of universal and imperishable truth. In so far as the Eternal can be apprehended under time conditions, it is so comprehended by the great man. It is he who first frees it from its temporary setting to become a possession for all time.'

One of the greatest movements in human progress began with the life and achievement of Jesus Christ. Though rooted in the soil of Judaism, and nurtured in the thought and practices of the national religion of Israel, the religion of Jesus Christ was nevertheless a new departure in the religious experience of men. Almost immediately becoming conscious of its own inherent greatness, it burst the limits of the national religion and made a way for itself into the great outside world. The man in whom this development first became fully matured and self-conscious, and who opened the treasures of his experience for all men and for all time was the Jew of Tarsus, Saul, otherwise called Paul, the Apostle and bond-slave of Jesus Christ.

In proposing a study of this Paul, whom history has written down as one of its great men, we start with the full consciousness that while his greatness consists in part in the unification and completion in his person of an already considerable historical development, it is evidenced even more in his giving

form and direction to an essentially new phase of religious experience. Paul was a Jew by birth. His life developed in the soil of Judaism. Antagonistic as he afterwards became to some of the leading tenets of that faith, we shall never understand either the man or his message if we do not realise that he remained *essentially a Jew* to the end in many of the springs of his being. He never fully broke with his ancestral faith. Jesus, his Master and Lord, was Himself a Jew. The early Jewish disciples and adherents of Jesus did not find it necessary to break with Jewish habits of worship and life. By them Jesus was primarily interpreted as the expected Messiah of the Jews; and 'righteousness' was still the only possible basis for human salvation. When addressing Jews such thoughts as these remained with Paul to the end, and *so long as the Christian religion was operative only within Jewish circles, the problem which drew forth the creative impulse in him did not exist.* But he, because he awoke to a wider vision of religion, transformedt his Jewish-Christian conception of the Messiahship, and revolutionised the content of the idea of 'righteousness.' Jesus was more than a Jew. He was of larger import than a Jewish Messiah. To think of Jesus as a Jew in reality limited Him; He was 'son of man.' He was universal. He belonged to man as man.

So, when Paul was faced with the problem of the acceptance of Jesus as Master and Lord by the Gentile world, his own intimate association with Jesus resulted, not in an external development of his old Jewish faith to meet the situation, but in an inner transformation of the religion of his fathers; so that he changed, for all who followed him, a religion that had hitherto been rigidly national to be a universal

religion. It was in this way that historic Christianity was born.

Thus we see in Paul not merely the full flower of the plant of Judaism, but the seed of something different, germinative, creative, revolutionary. The Judaism of his fathers has indeed persisted as a religion unchanged and stagnant; but the new creative impulse of Jesus Christ, interpreted for all time in terms of universal human life and experience in the life-experience of Paul, has become a religious force that has shown itself wonderfully adaptable to every situation in human life, whether individual, national, or universal; and is as quick with initiative and power in human life to-day as in the days of its beginnings.

We enter upon this study in the hope of being able to distinguish with some clearness between what Paul owed to his inheritance and what his creative activity comprehended. The difficulties which we shall encounter are apparent. The inner transformation of Judaism into Christianity in the person of Paul was not a simple but a complex process. To use an analogy from physical science, we are dealing not with a mechanical but a chemical compound, and analysis is not a simple matter. To understand Paul we shall need to reconstruct for ourselves his whole inner life-history. We shall have to bring his personality very near to us, and patiently pass in review the whole course of its development. We must needs walk with him through his life as an intimate friend, sharing sympathetically in the training, the diverse enthusiasms, the problems and struggles, and the victory of the man.

II

But why should we study Paul? Do his life and achievement justify so much importance being attached to his memory? Was he in reality a great epoch-making man?

One of the external marks by which the lives of great men are distinguished is the intensity of the love and of the hatred which they stimulate in others. It was so in the case of Jesus Christ, who was beloved of John and the other disciples as few have been loved, yet bitterly hated by the Scribes and the Pharisees. Genuine goodness of character combined with vigour of manhood in any man's life means antagonism for him, as well as appreciation. Jesus said to His disciples, 'Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you.'

Tried by this test Paul's life is the life of a great man. One of the chief attractions of his letters centres in the evidence they furnish of the deep and genuine affection that his 'brethren dearly beloved' bore towards him. But these same letters also emphasise the intensity of the hatred of those whose cherished religious privileges he antagonised. It is worthy of notice too that his chief opponents in this respect were either Jews or fellow-Christians. 'A man's foes shall be they of his own household.' From this fact sprang much of the tragedy of his life.

Even after his death these feelings of love and hatred equally pursued the great Apostle. All down the history of the Church we find the same fact—Paul the centre of admiration and the cherished leader of many, but the object of fierce resentment to others. At the present day it is not otherwise. The Apostle Paul is considered by not a few to be the greatest saint and theologian of the Christian

Church; but there are also not wanting those who, though scholars and in possession of all the facts, yet can see in him only the perverter and destroyer of the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus. One writer speaks of him thus: 'It is monstrous that men of any historical training should attach any importance whatever to this Paul. . . . It was Paul who introduced the Old Testament into the Church, through the influence of which book the Gospel has perished so far as it could perish; it was Paul who conferred upon us the priceless boon of the Pharisaic exegesis which proves anything from whatever you like, inserting the contents ready-made into the texts which are supposed to be found therein, and then pluming itself on a faithful adherence to the very words of Scripture. . . . It is he who saddled us with the Jewish view of history.'[1] Here it is a thinker who hates Paul's thought. The German philosopher Nietzsche hates the man himself. He terms him 'One of the most ambitious of men, a past master in importunacy, whose superstition was only equalled by his cunning, . . . a much tortured, much-to-be-pitied man, an exceedingly unpleasant personage both to himself and others.'[2]

We can thus argue to the greatness of Paul from the deep impression that he has made on the minds of others, from the love and the hatred that he has always inspired. Even his opponents, while they hate him, acknowledge his greatness. Indeed the question has been seriously raised whether Jesus or Paul was the real founder of historical Christianity. For it is hard to see how, apart from the work of the great

[1] Legendre, quoted in Weinel, *St. Paul, the Man and His Work*, p. 3.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

Apostle of the Gentiles, the religion of Jesus, as it was apprehended and practised by the earliest disciples of the Master, could ever have become a world religion. 'Of all the Christians of the first century Paul is undoubtedly the most conspicuous, in very truth a man of genius. When Jesus and the faith of His first disciples had won their victory over this man, their greatest adversary, then Christianity triumphed as it never did before or since.'[1] If, however, Paul was the founder of historic Christianity, Jesus Christ was the foundation of Paul's own religious life. Without Christ we should not have known Paul as we now know him, or proposed his life and achievement as a subject of study. His spiritual energy had its source in the heights of the life of Christ; and the rich flood of personal religion that flowed therefrom has issued into and watered that great river of Christian experience which permeates the whole course of Western history.

III

In what did this greatness of Paul consist? Great men ordinarily display their greatness by self-development and self-assertion; and we have ample proof of the excellence of Paul's natural qualities, and of his courage and daring; but his superiority to the men of his day lay not in any emphasising of his own personality, but rather in the strange and unusual effacement of his self as a separate entity, before the person of Jesus Christ. His whole ambition after he became a Christian was to be called the *bond-slave* of Christ. To Him he sacrificed everything in life, and won his every victory in His name alone. No one can understand the source of Paul's achievement in the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

history of religion who has not penetrated into this secret of his inner life. He was not merely *devoted* to Jesus Christ; he passionately *effaced his own personality* before Him, and found instead *a new principle of life* energising within the range of his consciousness, which he consistently interpreted as the active Spirit of the risen Jesus. If this fact be realised, we see how futile it is to contrast Paul and Christ as the first and second 'Founders' of Christianity. Their lives were in essence one. Paul indeed created the world mission of Christianity; but in this, as in all else, Jesus Christ created Paul. Through Christ Paul became 'a new creature.' Behind all the activity of the renewed Paul stands Jesus Christ, the source, the motive, the inspiration, the guide, and the strength of all his achievement.

That achievement for Christianity was indeed epoch-making. It covered almost the whole range of Christian activity. Paul was equally great whether we think of him as a missionary, as a statesman and organiser of the Church, as a thinker and theologian, or as a spiritual leader and inspiration in the lives of others.

He was great as a missionary. His achievement lay in converting Christianity from being a religion with a narrow national outlook into a missionary faith with a universal range. He did this by releasing it from the confining boundaries of Judaism, and by initiating its activities as a world-power. Others, the earliest disciples of Jesus, did indeed experience the power of the new faith; but Paul, basing on just the same experience, was the first to understand its significance for the whole world. When he was won over to Jesus Christ, Christianity was still practically nothing more than an insignificant sect among the

many sects of Judaism. The early disciples were all Jews. Side by side with the Christian worship of 'the upper room'—prayer, exhortation, and the breaking of bread—these still frequented the temple, and were known for their punctual observance of the ritual of Judaism.[1] What differentiated them from other Jews was their belief that Jesus was the Messiah, and their vivid faith that He would soon return as Messiah to the earth in a catastrophic manner. Loving, faithful, and active in witness-bearing as they were, still they did not know the resources that they possessed in Jesus. They were simple men, and they thought simply, naïvely, about Him. 'They sat at Jerusalem and preached and waited for Him to descend upon the clouds of heaven, with the New Jerusalem, and His many mansions for the poor and devout children of God.' Stephen, indeed, with a wider vision began to preach a wider Gospel. But this led immediately to his martyrdom, and to a general persecution of Christians. Some endured to the death, others were scattered abroad. Wherever they went they spread the Gospel of Jesus, but still they did not understand the width of the significance, or the universal range of the religion that was stirring in their hearts.

Thus, if we except Stephen, who undoubtedly was the true forerunner of Paul, but whose influence was cut short by his early martyrdom, Paul was the first to realise in all its bearings the universal significance and the independent standing of the religion of Christ. Even in his case, however, the full understanding of this truth was the result of a gradual process in his development. But it was he who undoubtedly saved the religion of Jesus, when 'the twelve could hardly

[1] Acts ii. 46, iii. 1.

keep it from sinking down into Judaism again, so heavily were they oppressed by the weight of ancient Jewish tradition.' It was he who eventually separated it from the trammels of the national religion, and made the new faith more true and living and free in the experience of the Gentile peoples than it ever was even in the experience of the primitive Jewish Churches in Judea. Thus Paul, by separating Christianity from the bonds of Judaism, made Christianity what it is to-day, a world-religion. In this task we shall doubtless find that he had his limitations. Still his achievement was a marvellous one for a single man to effect. Here, however, Paul himself would have us add another word. Constantly and consistently he refers to his varied activity in achieving this object—all his travels, his patience, and his endurance even unto death—as nothing but the external manifestation of the all-compelling power within him.

He was also great in his statesmanship and organising activity. Humanly speaking, the institution of the Church is due to Paul—the Church not merely in its individual congregational significance, but even more in its universal and ideal meaning. Wherever he went he founded churches, and the simple principles which were everywhere adopted for their control and guidance emanated from him. In this work of the organisation and the edification of the various Christian communities he drew alike from his practical experience of the life of the synagogue in the religion of his fathers and from principles gleaned from the ideals of government and the community-life of various religious cults that obtained in the Roman Empire. The organisation of the individual Christian congregation had much in common with the Jewish synagogue. But Paul's conception

rapidly developed from the idea of a collection of individual churches to the great ideal unity of Christians, the Church Universal, the one body whose Head is Christ. Here undoubtedly we can trace the influence of a cognate principle in the Roman Imperial policy of colonial government. In his organising activity, as in his theology, Paul also reflects the spirit of the surrounding ancient religions, which at this period had already exercised considerable influence on current Judaism. There was a side in Paul's personality which answered alike to the spirit of the cult of the ancient mysteries and to the philosophy of Plato ; which latter formed the basis of thinking at this time for every cultured mind. In these facts we have in part at least the explanation of how readily Paul's message, and the whole range of his organising activity, appealed to the Gentile world. Paul was a mediator between the old dying world of Greek culture and Pagan mysticism, and the new world of the life of the spirit in Jesus Christ. Alike in his interpretation of his religion, in the formulation of his ethics, and in his founding of the Christian Church, if Paul did not himself reconcile the new cult in all its interests to the surrounding ' world ' of his day, he at least laid down lines of thought and conduct by the development of which that reconciliation was effected later. To-day the permanent validity of much of the doctrinal and cultural side of this reconciliation with the ancient world is being strongly questioned by many, who think that the purity and the simplicity of the religion of Jesus is being thereby compromised. This question is one which touches the very foundation of Western civilisation and ethics as well as of the whole policy of the Church in the West, and to understand its implications satisfactorily we shall need to study with all the

more zest the origins of so momentous a process in history.

Further, Paul was not only a leader of men in practical religion ; he was also a leader in the thought of men. He was not indeed a theologian in the modern scientific sense, for he did not construct a theological system, nor did he ever develop an interest in abstract thought. What he did do was very different. He interpreted the religion of Jesus Christ in the language of his day, and related the new experiences of his own soul and the manifestations of the new religion around him to the thought current in the circles he moved in. In this way Christianity first took intellectual form and became intelligible to thinking men. And just as we have found Paul's external activity to be based ultimately on his connection with Jesus Christ, so too we find that in his thought all leads to Christ as its goal. Inspired by his love of Christ, and dependent upon Him, Paul has impressed on the thinking world a series of fundamental ideas consisting at once of a new conception of history, of ethics, and of religion. These ideas have persisted and become part of the mental equipment of men. To-day, countless men are thinking these very thoughts of Paul, who do not know Paul, nor realise their debt to him.

When we look closely into the achievement of Paul we find another reason for the great impression that he has made upon the minds and affections of men. He was great as a spiritual leader. Weinel observes : 'In the West the soul of man has ever yearned to obtain two blessings by means of religion—holiness and immortality. In scarcely any man in ancient times has this yearning been manifested as clearly and loudly as in Paul ; no one has ever believed with such

intensity that his yearning had been satisfied, and in no one has this belief been transformed into as great a capacity for ethical volition and courageous action. *That is why he has kindled this inner life in so many others*, and the flame of his enthusiasm still burns through the centuries.' [1]

This is the culminating point of Paul's many-sided greatness, and it is also its explanation. His life in all its aspects was religious, but it was also *purposive*. How clearly he expresses this in his letter to the Corinthians, and at the same time vindicates his method :

' And to the Jews I became as a Jew,
That I might gain Jews ;
To them that are under the law, as under the law,
(Not being myself under the law,)
That I might gain them that are under the law ;
To them that are without law, as without law,
(Not being without law to God, but under law to Christ,)
That I might gain them that are without law.
To the weak, I became weak,
That I might gain the weak ;
I am become all things to all men,
That I may by all means save some.
And I do all things for the Gospel's sake.' [2]

Here is not opportunism, as some have suggested, but self-consecration to a great religious purpose in obedience to a great spiritual experience. The purpose is the reproduction of a similar experience in others ; and in the successful achievement of that purpose we find in Paul the world's greatest example of genuine and effective spiritual leadership.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 10. [2] 1 Cor. ix. 20–23.

PART ONE

Chapter I: The Sources of our Knowledge of Paul

OUR information about Paul is derived from two main sources, from a combination of which we are able to acquire a fairly adequate knowledge of the kind of man he was, and of the outstanding events of his life. Of these two sources the letters of the Apostle that have come down to us are of primary importance, but the history of the early development of the Christian Church recorded in the Book of the Acts gives much information about him that is second only to the other in importance. In addition to these we may mention as subsidiary sources certain traditional stories about the Apostle written in the second and later centuries, which, however, are of little historical worth; and what is far more valuable, the general history of education and society in Paul's day, from which we can glean much by inference concerning the mental world of Paul, and concerning his training and social instincts.

The letters of Paul form the most ancient and illuminating documents of the Christian religion. Unfortunately only a few are now extant. Those that remain to us were written at intervals between the years 50 and 70 A.D., either to single Churches or to groups of Churches in which the Apostle had a vital interest.[1] These Churches presented many points of contrast to one another. Some were in Asia, some in

[1] Except the letter to Philemon, which was written to an individual. The Pastoral letters in their present state are not included in the letters of the Apostle.

Europe. Some were situated in the midst of rude and uncivilised tribes, where the prevailing ethnic religions were of a low type of development. Others were in close touch with the great civilisation and more cultured religions of Greece and Rome. Some were mainly Jewish in origin ; others almost wholly Gentile. Thus these Churches displayed very varied and contrasted tendencies of life, and constantly presented to the Apostle many difficult problems and perplexing situations. We find these contrasts reflected in the letters. And although the documents that are extant to-day number but few, they are, because of their nature, splendidly illuminating from the point of view of the study of Paul's personality and way of thinking. They are not ordinary letters ; 'they take us into the very centre and spring of the life of Paul ; they seem in many places to be written with blood rather than with ink. They bring before us all the workings of the heart of Paul, all the turns and habits of his intellect, the very secret of his humanity.'

The authenticity of these letters is fortunately no longer a matter for doubt. It is not necessary therefore to preface our study with an inquiry into their genuineness. Modern scholarship has made it possible for us to read all that is important in them with the same confidence as we have in the letters of Cicero. We can with security abandon the doubting, critical spirit of a past generation and examine their contents with a genuine historical and spiritual sympathy.[1]

[1] For full information on this point readers are referred to Dr. Jülicher's *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, and to Dr. Moffatt's *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*. The latter with hesitation regards the letter to the Ephesians as the work, not of Paul, but of a disciple of Paul.

The letters fall naturally into three groups, each of which more or less reflects the circumstances under which it was written. The first group contains the two letters to the Thessalonian Church, and is relatively of little importance for our study. The second includes the great central letters—Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, and Galatians. The third group includes the letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians, and the more personal letter to Philemon. Between the second and third of these groups we can trace a certain amount of development in thought, which is natural, considering that the third group was written when Paul was a prisoner at Rome, and reflects the days of retirement and meditation which he had perforce to pass there. On one subject only do we notice any considerable modification of opinion—that of the question of the second coming of Christ. In all other respects what is found is a natural development of the Apostle's thought.

While the Epistles are thus the main source of our knowledge of Paul, especially of his thought and character, they throw comparatively little light on the external events of his life. It is true that we find many autobiographical and local references, but if these were not supplemented from other sources we should know but little of his external activity. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles, however, throws a flood of light on this side of his life, and furnishes us with the necessary background against which the man, Paul, is clearly revealed. These two main sources of our information regarding Paul are accordingly to be regarded as complementary.

Very varying opinions have been held with respect to the historical value and reliability of the Acts of the Apostles. Formerly, owing mainly to the influence

of the Tübingen school of criticism, which followed the lead of Baur, it was largely held that this book was a work of the second century, and reflected a bias in a struggle between the Petrine and Pauline forms of Christianity. The authorship of Luke was denied, and the history of Paul was declared to be distorted for polemical purposes.

Later criticism greatly modified this view, and pointed out that the theory of a serious collision between the followers of Peter and Paul in the early Christian Church has no substantial evidence to justify it. The book, however, was still regarded as a second century work, incorporating many documents verbatim from first century writers.

The best scholars of to-day have, however, entirely abandoned this theory of redaction; and thanks chiefly to the researches of Dr. Harnack and Sir William Ramsay, we can now safely assume the Book of Acts to have been written by Luke, the friend and comrade of Paul, and place the date of its composition at least as early as between the years 70 and 80 A.D. It was, therefore, written sufficiently near to the events which it records to justify us in placing a high historical value on its contents. In using this book, however, we ought to pay strict attention to the idiosyncrasies of Luke as a historian, especially to his whole conception of history as an art, and to his special purpose in writing the book. Ramsay has written illuminatingly on these points in his work, 'St. Paul, the Traveller and the Roman Citizen,' and in regard to the whole question of the relation of the Book of Acts to the Pauline Epistles, this author's researches ought to be carefully studied.

A special word ought perhaps to be said with reference to the speeches of Paul, recorded in this

book. No one claims for them that they are verbatim reports of Paul's words. In the nature of the case that is impossible. At the best they contain only bare outlines of Paul's actual speeches, and ought only to be used with caution as representing his true thought. Luke was a Greek, and was imbued with Greek ideals. Greek historians did not as a rule record actual speeches as they were spoken ; but, in keeping with the Greek conception of history, they felt at liberty to put words in the mouths of their characters in harmony with the situation which they were describing. It is uncertain how far Luke represented this tendency of Greek art in writing his history ; but a very little reflection on the possibilities for the accurate recording of the speeches in question, and of their nature, makes us hesitate to use them as authorities of the first value in our study of the development of Paul's thought.

One other remark is necessary regarding Luke's method of recording the events of the life of Paul. Ramsay has pointed out that this historian did not aim at a full description of his hero's activities, but records only those events in his life which have an important bearing on the development of the early Church. His primary interest was not Paul, but the coming into being and the progress of Christianity as a life and a system of religion. He is only concerned with Paul as he represents great points of departure in the early development of the Christian Church. We shall encounter, therefore, many lacunæ in our knowledge of the events of Paul's life, and find months and even periods of years the nature of his activity in which we shall be able to realise only by a sympathetic use of our imagination.

It is principally here that we may find our sub-

sidiary sources of knowledge to be useful. The traditional stories of the second and later centuries contain little of value. At best they witness to the effect that the great work of Paul had on the minds of those that came after him, and rarely may they be found useful in suggesting lines of conjecture. But Paul was a Pharisee and a Roman citizen. The history of contemporary Pharisaism and of the social life of the Greek cities under Roman rule is consequently of very special value to us in filling in the light and shade of the picture of his life, enabling us in part at least to realise the manner and contents of his education, and his initial outlook on life. The political history and geography of the provinces of Asia Minor and of Greece are also useful in helping us to comprehend Paul's movements and activities in his various missionary journeyings.

Chapter II: Early Life and Training

The Influence of Tarsus

WE are almost without any direct information about the life of Paul until the time that he appears in history as the persecutor of the infant Christian community at Jerusalem. We have, however, materials for forming a fairly adequate picture of his youth, and are able, in part at least, to trace his early development in close connection with his environment and manner of education.

His birthplace is known to us, and students of Jewish antiquities have made us acquainted with the type of training he must have undergone as a Jewish boy. We have a fair knowledge also of the political, social, and religious institutions and customs of his native city and of the neighbouring country; and are thus able to enumerate with sufficient accuracy many of the influences that served to mould his mind and character in his boyhood and youth,[1] and equipped him with many of those personal qualities which we afterwards find to be so characteristic of him in manhood.

Our first inquiry is concerned with the date and place of his birth. Regarding the former we can only offer an approximate conjecture. In the year 33 A.D., when those who stoned Stephen laid their garments at the feet of Paul, he is described as being

[1] Paul left Tarsus when a mere boy for education at Jerusalem. We consider it more than probable that, his education finished, he returned to Tarsus as a young man and remained there for a considerable time.

'a young man.'[1] The Greek word used may mean anything from eighteen to thirty years old. As, however, we have evidence that immediately afterwards Paul occupied an important position in the councils of the Jews at Jerusalem,[2] we may conclude that he was near to the mature age of thirty at this time. In the year 62 A.D., when in prison at Rome, he wrote a letter to Philemon in which he called himself 'an old man.'[3] He could not well have so termed himself had he not at this time reached at least his sixtieth year. In this way we reach the conclusion that he was born about the same time as Jesus, or perhaps a year or two later; so that when Jesus was a boy playing in the country village of Nazareth, far away to the north over the ridges of the mountains of Lebanon, the boy Paul was similarly at play in the busy crowded streets of his native city, Tarsus.

At this time Tarsus was the chief town and seaport of the Roman province of Cilicia. Its position made it a city of great influence, for it lay on the great trade route between the Eastern and Western worlds, and was the central meeting place at once of the civilisation and culture of Greece, and of the wisdom and the mystery of the religions of the Orient. It was thus a place that made a powerful appeal to the imagination of its inhabitants, and in after days we find Paul looking back with pride to his connection with his native city. 'I am a citizen of no mean city.'[4] We are in the fortunate position of possessing a considerable amount of information about this city from various sources, and are thus enabled to picture for ourselves some of Paul's youthful experiences, and estimate their influence upon his life.

[1] Acts vii. 58.
[2] Acts ix. 2.
[3] Philemon i. 9.
[4] Acts xxi. 39.

Cilicia was the Roman province situated at the south-east of Asia Minor, adjacent to the important province of Syria. Under the rule of the Romans it had a very marked history, for it was in succession their chosen battlefield in the Parthian, Armenian, and the civil wars. In those days of war the province must have suffered severely, but the city of Tarsus seems to have emerged with undiminished prosperity. At the time when Paul was born and during his youth the city was in the enjoyment of a period of unwonted peace and progress.

The inhabitants of Tarsus were not a homogeneous people. Their origin is lost in obscurity, but there is evidence to show that in very early days Tarsus was colonised by Ionian Greeks. For five centuries the city was successively under Assyrian, Median, and Persian domination, and under the influence of Alexander the Great it became subject to the semi-oriental Greek kings of Syria of the Seleucid dynasty, when Greek influences were partially restored. About the year 171 B.C. the city was reconstituted by Antiochus Epiphanes, who introduced into it an entirely new colony of pure Greeks, and also a colony of Jews. At this time the city was transformed into a Greek city-state with autonomous municipal government. But in spite of these changes it remained predominantly an Oriental city, until it came more directly under the power of Rome in 25 B.C. In the days of Paul it is most probable that the original orientalised inhabitants of Tarsus were standing out for their old habits of life in opposition to Greek customs which were being introduced by the new Greek colonists. The Jewish colony, in all probability, as being themselves Orientals and conservative in spirit, tended to side with the native population.

The significance of this history for our study lies in the fact that Paul in his young and formative days was intimately in touch with both the Western or Greek and with the Oriental or traditional elements of Tarsian life; while as a member of the Jewish colony he could withdraw himself from both these tendencies and judge them from an external point of view. It was just this contact with very varied types of life, and the sympathies engendered by it, that enabled him to become the keen discerner of men that he was, and to adapt himself in the after days with such practical wisdom and effectiveness to every kind of circumstance and to every kind of audience in the pursuit of his life mission.[1] We shall here only refer to three elements in the life of the people of Tarsus which must have had a special meaning for the development of Paul.

Tarsus was in the first place a great centre of commerce. The city was built on both sides of the Cydnus, a river which was navigable up to the town, but which above it was a rushing cataract descending from the snowy peaks of the neighbouring Taurus mountains. It had a large trade in timber, and in the long fine hair of goats bred in the mountains which was woven into coarse cloth and used in the manufacture of tents. Tarsus was also the seaport for the extensive internal trade of Asia Minor, which came down to the city through the famous pass called the Cilician Gates. The streets of the city were thus constantly crowded with travellers bent on trade from the interior, and the harbour was filled with ships carrying strangers from all parts of the then known world. In such circumstances a spirit of cosmopolitanism was sure to prevail, and

[1] *Cf.* 1 Cor. ix. 19–22.

the conception of the essential unity of mankind to dawn on a reflective mind. We can easily imagine how the lad Paul, as he mixed from day to day in this crowd of strangers, had his mind enlarged, his sympathies aroused, and his wits quickened by the various sights and the tales of many countries that were presented to his youthful imagination. It was doubtless in this very practical school of life that he learned to recognise and appreciate the many differing types among men and developed his marvellous skill and power in dealing with them.

Secondly, Tarsus was a centre of great intellectual activity. Speaking of the city a little earlier in its history, the historian Strabo said that it excelled even Athens and Alexandria in its love of philosophy and every other form of culture. The pursuit of learning was a passion with the Tarsian. We find that representatives of the different schools of Greek philosophy were located here in teaching establishments; and poetry, grammar, and natural philosophy were also studiously cultivated. The cultured citizen of Tarsus took a pride in these schools, and was absorbingly interested in their disputations. But as the days went on the methods of the sophists increasingly prevailed, and learning became more and more and more divorced from the practical affairs of life. The whole city was filled with the noise and petty quarrels of the grammarians until finally in a short time the schools of Tarsus fell into bad repute.

Paul grew up in this atmosphere, and it left its mark on him. Being a Jew he was, of course, not educated in the Greek schools of Tarsus, but he was evidently familiar with their methods, their failings, and their futility. Many years after, when writing to the Christians at Corinth, we find him thanking

God that he did not find in the Church either a sophist, or a grammarian, or a disputer of this world.[1] 'He had seen enough of this war of empty personalities, the rivalry of conceit, the persecution and chatter and espionage of this learned world; and all his life long he was full of that contempt of the wisdom of this world which is one of the fundamental characteristics of his thought.'[2]

It is not to be supposed, however, that this negative attitude was the only result of Paul's contact with the intellectual classes of Tarsus. In all probability his family was one of importance and fair social standing, and moved among the more cultured citizens of the city. Gradually and unconsciously through this communion of life Paul imbibed much of the spirit of Greek civilisation, and the national and somewhat narrow outlook on life which belonged to his upbringing as a Jew was corrected and universalised by the influence of those larger visions in Greek circles. In particular, some of the nobler principles of Stoicism, which was the form of philosophy predominant in Tarsus, seem to have appealed to his intellect, and in his favourite opposition of *the flesh* and *the spirit* in his analysis of the nature of man he doubtless owed much to his familiarity with certain root principles of this school of Greek thought. Moreover, the idea of human life in its individual aspect as subject to change and progress, and as leading up to an ultimate goal of spiritual freedom was very possibly derived from his observation of, and participation in, the liberal ideals embodied in the social and municipal life and institutions of Tarsus. For under the Greek system of education a man was encouraged to choose and form

[1] 1 Cor. i. 20.
[2] Hausrath, *New Testament Times*, vol. iii. p. 7.

his life for himself, and to find as aids in his personal development the educational, social, and municipal institutions of the city.

Another line of development of Paul that we trace to his experience of life in a free Greek city is that his outlook on life, from being rigidly national and Jewish, became universalised. At this period there was indeed in the Judaism of the 'Dispersion' a strong tendency towards a wider outlook on life than that which prevailed at Jerusalem, and Greeks were welcomed into their synagogues as proselytes. But this movement towards a recognition of a wider brotherhood among men did not originate with the Jews. We find that among the Greeks the municipal patriotism of their cities was itself being widened and developed into the idea of the life of the Empire, and the whole policy of Imperial Rome fostered this development. Thus in general men's thoughts and aspirations were travelling out towards a universal and corporate idea of humanity. The Jewish ideal had too long confined the promises and grace of God to one chosen people. But the whole bent of Greek life at this time, especially under the unifying influence of Roman imperialism, was towards the idea of the common life of humanity; and later on 'Paul perceived in a flash of illumination that the universal Hellenism and the universalised Jewish right of inheritance to God's promise and grace, must be co-extensive; that each was the complement of the other.' The time came when this great idea effectively seized on the Apostle's imagination and gave form and shape to his whole evangelistic policy. For it needed but the Christian Gospel of the brotherhood of man, based as it is on a divine-human relation-

ship in Jesus Christ, to complete and energise this universalising tendency in Paul by enthusing him with an all-constraining and all-embracing principle of altruistic love, at once unifying and self-sacrificing. Thus in the person of Paul the universalistic principle of Christianity not only fulfilled the essential religious ideals of his ancestral religion, but transformed the universalistic tendencies of Greek and Roman civilisation and culture into a still larger ideal of religious freedom, and a life of world-wide human brotherhood.

Tarsus was, in the third place, a great centre of pagan religion, and the third influence to which Paul in his youth was exposed arose out of his pagan surroundings. He daily saw the sights and heard the sounds peculiar to a particularly passionate type of Gentile religion. Here the pagan oracles still spoke, and the luxurious Sardanapalus was honoured both by the people of Tarsus and of the neighbouring town of Achiale. It is reported that in the latter town there was a statue of this god represented as snapping his fingers, while underneath ran the inscription 'Eat, drink, and make merry, naught else is worth this' (*i.e.* a snap of the fingers).[1] It is in keeping with this sentiment that we read that Tarsus was 'the centre of a species of Baal worship of an imposing but unspeakably degrading character, and at certain seasons of the year it was the scene of festivals which were frequented by the whole population of the neighbouring region, and were accompanied by orgies of a degree of moral abominableness happily beyond the reach even of our imagination.'

We can easily surmise what must have been the feeling of disgust and antagonism that prevailed in

[1] *Cf.* 1 Cor. xv. 32.

Jewish circles at Tarsus when they witnessed these excesses of pagan religion. As a boy Paul must have heard many a condemnation and many a warning regarding the religious practices of the native people of Tarsus; and the burning words of the old Israelitish prophets against idolatry and uncleanness took a fresh and a real meaning in his mind. All through his life Paul preserved this reaction against the practice of idolatry and the horrors of pagan religious rites. But he did not hold this, the true Jewish, relation to the pagan world without some modification. 'He had come into contact with pagans, and knew they were not monsters (as they seemed to the Palestinian zealots), but human beings. He was so indebted to them that he felt bound, in return for what he had learned from them, to go and tell them of the truth which had been revealed.[1] He had learned by experience of the promptings to good, of the preference for the right, of self-blame for wrongdoing, which were clearly manifest in their nature.'

He was also keenly aware of the sense of weariness and the restlessness of the pagan world of his day, and of its dumb implicit longing for a real touch with the living God and a revival of life. He attributed the degeneration of pagan religion mainly to the practice of idolatry, which, he maintained, was responsible for the loss of the sense of God's presence among men, and for their consequent darkness and uncleanness of life.[2] But he also held that all that was necessary for their revival was a recognition of the true and living God, and conscious co-operation with Him. Even in their degenerate state, God was striving to make Himself known to men, and the fruits

[1] *Cf.* Rom. i. 14–15. [2] *Cf.* Rom. i. 18–32.

of God's presence could be recognised. So it was that he could advise the young Christian community at Philippi to take account of these things in their lives, and to acknowledge 'whatsoever things are true, honourable, pure, lovely and of good report' in the world around them.[1]

These kindly feelings of Paul and his width of outlook in the matter of intercourse between his converts and their Gentile friends are reminiscent of days gone by in his own life when by friendly intercourse with earnest and high-minded pagans he appreciated the fact that the object of the deep longings of Gentile life and of his own were ultimately one and the same—the personal possession of the living and true God. It was only, however, when the light of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ had flooded his soul that he saw with clearness that, even as in his own life the Law of Moses had been an obstacle to his spiritual progress, the pagan in greater degree had missed the mark by mistaking an image of stone or wood graven with man's hands for the living God. Paul always acknowledged and valued the earnest striving of the human soul to know and possess God; but idolatry he denounced as the great mistake and curse of paganism. Both these feelings in their beginning can be traced to the intimate knowledge he acquired of pagan life in his early days at Tarsus. And the influence that intercourse of this kind eventually had on him may be gauged by the extent to which, when later on he was occupied with the task of reconstructing his religious life and interpreting his experience to others, we find him showing an intimate acquaintance with the aspirations and sacred language

[1] Phil. iv. 8.

of some of the pagan mystic cults, and using these as aids in discovering a terminology and ritual by which he might explain and communicate the deeper significance of his own life in Jesus Christ.[1]

[1] On this subject *cf.* Percy Gardner, *Religious Experiences of St. Paul,* and Hatch's Hibbert Lectures, *The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity.*

Chapter III: Early Life and Training

The Influence of Judaism

THERE was a colony of Jews in Tarsus, whose origin probably dated from the reconstruction of the city by Antiochus Epiphanes in the year 171 B.C. Under Roman rule these Jews, in common with other Jews in the Empire, enjoyed special privileges in regard to the practice of their religion. It was thus possible for them to remain purely Jewish in sentiment and ritual even amidst the many-sided interests of the large Greek city. As a matter of fact there is evidence to show that the Jews in Tarsus excelled in national spirit and in religious zeal. They preserved a close connexion with Jerusalem, the mother city of their religion; for we know that they maintained a synagogue of their own there. It was in this synagogue some years later that the tumultuous opposition arose to the Christian evangelist Stephen, which issued in his martyrdom.[1] It is recorded also that many Jews from Cilicia took part in the last Jewish war, and perished fighting fanatically in the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The household language of these Tarsian Jews was most probably the old Aramaic dialect, though of course the speech of their public and business life must have been Greek. Paul was evidently well versed in both these languages.

Paul's father was an orthodox Jew belonging to this colony. He was a Pharisee, 'of the straitest sect' of the Jewish religion.[2] His descent was traced

[1] Acts vi. 9. [2] Acts xxvi. 5, Phil. iii. 5.

from the tribe of Benjamin, the only tribe which remained faithful to Judah at the time of the division of the tribes. Of the mother of Paul we know nothing, save that she was of pure Jewish extraction. We may conjecture that the tone of the family in Paul's home was characterised by austerity and a devotion to a lofty morality. The days of his youth were tinged with seriousness, and the discipline of the home was probably rigid. To these things we may trace the development in Paul of that tender, delicate conscience, and that strong resolute will which marked his whole life.

The family possessed the Roman citizenship. This may have been acquired either as a gift in return for distinguished service, or by purchase. In either case its possession secured for the family a good standing in Tarsus. It is sufficiently evident that Paul's family was not socially an obscure one, and that it was rich. He himself wrote, years later, that if it were lawful he had more right than most to boast of his descent.[1] On this point, however, Deissmann writes :

'It appears to me certain that Paul of Tarsus, although his native town was a seat of high Greek culture, did not come from the literary upper classes, but from the artisan non-literary classes, and that he remained with *them*. He was a plain and simple man whose trade was the economic foundation of his existence.'[2] 'It would be a mistake, however, to speak of St. Paul the artisan as a " proletarian " in the sense which the word usually bears with us. The mere fact that he was born a Roman citizen shows that his family cannot have been in poor circumstances. As a freeborn man he was socially above the slaves who were so numerous in his churches.'[3]

[1] Phil. iii. 3–4.
[2] Deissmann, *St. Paul*, p. 50.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

Paul's upbringing was strictly in accordance with Jewish law and custom. He was circumcised on the eighth day, and from his very swaddling-clothes was taught by his parents and associates to believe in one God, the Father of men and the Creator of the world. In those days the whole aim of education among the Jews was to make the young perfectly familiar with the Law of Moses. Josephus says: 'Since we learn the Laws from our first consciousness, we have them, as it were, engraven on our souls.' Philo records that the Jews are instructed in the knowledge of the Law from their earliest youth, and bear the image of the Law in their souls. It was in accordance with this ideal that Paul was educated, and some of the limitations that are evident both in the form and matter of his thinking in his later days can be directly traced to this one-sidedness in his training. At the age of five he attended the daily reading of Scripture in his father's house, and a few years later he went to the synagogue at the three hours of prayer. There also every Monday, Wednesday, and Sabbath he listened to the exposition of the Law, and as he grew older he began to take part in these discussions. Having learned to read and write, he next began to occupy himself in transcribing the Law, until at a very early age every word and even every syllable was perfectly familiar to him. This type of education was in full accord with the current ideal of Phariseeism, which summed up the life of a Jew as comprehended in the knowledge and practice of the Law.[1]

We have abundant evidence that Paul was diligent in his study of the Scriptures. His letters are filled with references both to the Law and to the history

[1] *Cf.* Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, ii. 2, 42–89.

of Israel. Though he lived in a Greek city and must have had many Greek associates, his youthful imagination was set on fire, not by stories of Heracles and the other heroes of Greek mythology, but by the sacred narrative of the doings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; of Moses, Samuel, and David; and of the prophets of the religion of his fathers.

The acme of the ambition of a Jewish boy in the dispersion was to go to Jerusalem to complete his study. Paul's ability and his diligence marked him out as worthy; and probably when he was about twelve or thirteen years old, he was sent by his father to Jerusalem there to finish his education.[1] He was destined in the purpose of his relatives to become a Rabbi or teacher of the Law.

But before we follow him to Jerusalem we must note that he had learned a trade in these days of his youth. We must not infer from this fact that his family was poor, for it was a wise custom among the Jews that all their boys should learn a trade, no matter how rich the family or how high their social position. The trade that Paul learned was a very common one in Tarsus, and it is not improbable that it was the trade of the family. He learned tent-making. The long hair of the goats that inhabited the Cicilian hills was brought into the city, and there woven into a coarse cloth that was used for making tents and for similar purposes. In after days we shall find Paul, in all probability cast off by his family, supporting himself by working at this trade in his missionary journeys.[2]

As the land route from Tarsus to Jerusalem was both long and laborious, it is most likely that Paul journeyed by the sea-route. The Romans had by this time cleared the sea of pirates, and there were

[1] Acts xxii. 3, xxvi. 4. [2] Acts xviii. 3, 2 Thess. iii. 8.

many merchant vessels which plied in trade with Tarsus. The voyage was a new experience for Paul, and we can picture for ourselves the keen interest that he took in the many novel sights of the journey. Most of all were his emotions stirred as he neared the goal of his travel, when at length he planted his foot on the sacred soil of Palestine, and caught sight of the holy city of Jerusalem, and the venerated mount of the Temple. What memories must have been his as he thus visited for the first time the many places of sacred memory in the history of his people !

It is interesting to recall the fact that about this very same time Jesus also came to Jerusalem with his father and mother, and visited the Temple, and put questions to the wise men there. He too must have gazed with an awakening consciousness at just the same sights as met the eyes of the eager young Tarsian student, and conversed in the courts of the Temple with just the same type of men as now became Paul's regular instructors.[1] Jesus, however, after a few days went back again to the simple life of the village ; but Paul remained in the courts of the Temple, and was profoundly and permanently influenced by the training he was subjected to there. His previous schooling in his father's home, and in the synagogue of the Jews in Tarsus, now received its full development and crown in his sojourn at Jerusalem ; and when a few years afterwards he emerged into public life, it was with a reputation well above the average for knowledge, skill, and enthusiasm in Jewish rabbinical learning. Not only so, but, even more significant for our study, in personal belief and purpose of life he had become a typical and zealous Pharisee. To understand this development in Paul we must

[1] *Cf.* Luke ii. 46.

pass under review and appreciate the Jerusalem of his ſtudent days.

Herod, the tyrant mentioned in our Gospels, was dead; his ſucceſſor Archelaus was in exile; and Judea had for a ſhort time been conſtituted into a Roman Province. For the preſent the days of turbulence and bloodſhed were over, and Jerusalem was under the control of one of the four Roman Procurators who preceded Pontius Pilate in that office. This Roman governor, for perſonal ſecurity, lived at Cæſarea on the ſea-coaſt, and both there and in Jerusalem Roman ſoldiers were ſtationed. The Roman power dominated everything; Roman money was current in the market-place, and Latin words began to be introduced in ordinary converſation.

This political change had a marked effect in reſtoring peace and quietneſs to the country. It had alſo an even more momentous result in effecting a very important modification in Jewiſh religion.

In the middle of the ſecond century before Chriſt the ill-adviſed attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to foiſt the Greek religion upon the Jews precipitated the ſucceſſful revolt of the Maccabees. Under the influence of that revolt the ſpirit of patriotiſm and of nationality ran ſtrong in the land, and the hopes of the people centred enthuſiaſtically in the future development of a free and independent Jewiſh nation. These hopes were, however, eſſentially of a religious nature, and found their culmination in the expectation of a Meſſiah who would come and rule over the reſtored nation, a warrior and a prince of the royal line of David. Progreſs was thus to be along the line of national development, and Jerusalem would eventually become the centre of light, and the ſource of righteouſneſs for the whole world.

The coming of the Roman and the destruction of every vestige of Jewish national independence effectually destroyed these national expectations, and men's minds turned from politics to religion. The priests and the Levites, whose interest was mainly connected with the Temple worship, but who had all along enthusiastically upheld the political ideal, now became of less importance in the life of the people than the Pharisees and the Scribes. It was indeed the day of the triumph of the Pharisaic ideal.

This ideal had its centre in two principles, which had a very close relation to each other. These found expression in a vivid hope, and a very present duty, the fulfilment of the former wholly depending on the performance of the latter.

The Pharisee looked for the coming of a Deliverer or Messiah who in some supernatural and catastrophic way would drive out the hated Roman power and rule the kingdom for Jehovah. Then would Jerusalem become the light of the nations, and from her as a centre, righteousness and peace would radiate in all directions.

The fulfilment of this expectation, however, depended on the perfect keeping of the Law by the people. This then was their urgent and immediate duty. In the past the coming of the Messiah had been retarded by the disobedience and uncleanness of the people ; the hope of the nation now rested in a new devotion to the Law. A fresh zeal and passion for the Law was thus created, and in the main this ideal of the Pharisees became the general creed of all.

In this way when Paul came as a youth to study in Jerusalem, he found the paramount interest in religious and intellectual circles to be the Law of Moses, and the determination of the meaning of that

Law for the present world in the light of its traditional interpretations. And being himself a Pharisee by birth and association he immediately became enamoured of this spirit and doctrine of the leaders of the Pharisees in Jerusalem. 'At Jerusalem, however, he was not only an adherent of this Pharisaic Pietism, but within that extraordinarily active and precise body he became one of the most fanatical enthusiasts. In after days when he compared himself with his contemporaries who sat crouching near him in the hall of instruction, committing their traditional wisdom to memory, he could say that he "profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in my own nation, being more exceedingly jealous of the traditions of my fathers."'[1]

It should be noted that this sect of the Pharisees was a purely religious association. From their earliest origin their attitude was one of aloofness from politics. At one period only in their history did they enter the arena of political life, and that was when the very existence of their religion was imperilled by the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to introduce the Greek religion into Judea. At that time they actively supported the cause of the Maccabees, and contributed not a little to the success of that enterprise. Afterwards when their religious liberty was once more secure, their active interest in politics ceased. A few, however, still preserved the hope of a distinct Jewish nationality, and developed in the time of the Romans into the enthusiastic and turbulent subsect of the Zealots. These were not content with an attitude of faith and waiting. They had a vivid and immediate expectation of the Messiah. They eagerly watched for the signs of His coming,

[1] Gal. i. 14.

and were ever ready on the slightest indication to flock to Him in arms. There had already occurred several false alarms of this nature,[1] and even the Romans at times felt insecure in the face of this turbulence. Thus in these days the whole land pulsated with expectant religious faith and enthusiasm, and the life of the people 'revolved round these two poles, fulfilment of the Law and the hope of future glory.'

Another element in the life of the Pharisees ought also to be mentioned. They preserved a strict attitude of aloofness and superiority to the mass of the people. Their very name signified 'the separated,' and the mark of this separation lay in their exact and scrupulous observance of the Law and the traditions of the fathers in their application to their daily life, in contrast with the simpler and freer life of the common people. The latter had neither the knowledge nor the means nor the leisure for the exact observance of the Law. For to keep the Law according to the Pharisaic interpretation and practice was a very burdensome and costly thing. Nevertheless in the eyes of the Pharisees, those who did not perfectly keep the Law were 'unclean,' and to associate with such was unlawful and unpatriotic. These were consequently despised and treated with contumely. And it was in this 'separateness' from the common people that lay the roots of that pride, cruelty, injustice, and hypocrisy which marked the character of many Pharisees, and which called forth such strong language of condemnation of them from Jesus.[2]

Paul entered into the midst of this expectant and enthusiastically religious community when he came up to Jerusalem as a student. The seeds of Pharisaic enthusiasm and hope readily took root and sprang up

[1] Acts v. 36–37. [2] *Cf.* Luke xi. 39–44.

into vigorous life in a mind and heart already well prepared by a cognate home-training. His mind, emotions, and energy soon became saturated with the spirit of the life pulsating around him. The current expectations of the coming of the Messiah furnished food for his thought-life. His affections became deeply engaged on the things of the Law, dear to every Pharisee's heart. And now too began within him that titanic struggle that caused unrest and bitterness in his inner life for many a year, and persisted in his memory long after it had become finally resolved in his experience of Jesus Christ.[1] In this way, in these his student days, the whole man, intellect, affections, and will, found material for development in the restless throbbing religious life around him; and Paul already began to be characterised by that zeal and enthusiasm and energy of life which became so remarkable in his later days, and to which not a little of his success as a missionary was due. 'Saul, the Rabbi, had inherited a great soul. His love was warmer than that of other men; his hate too. In the letters of the full-grown man glows the fire of an ardent soul, to whom the whole of life presents itself in violent contrasts. Heaven and earth, light and darkness, day and night, spirit and flesh, God and devil, truth and falsehood; *just as his people lived among these contrasts, so he entered into them all with whole-hearted fervour.* Effort and conflict was his portion: he fought first for, and then against, the Law, with his life constantly at stake; voluntarily giving up every single hour of pleasure and the sleep of his nights, renouncing the joys of marriage, the love of children, the peace of home.

'This lofty soul lived in the great hopes of his

[1] Rom. vii. 7–24.

people with a more glowing flame, he strove after the great things to be awaited more ardently than the meaner souls who can more or less be filled with the joys and sorrows of this world. His fight for spiritual purity was closer and intenser than theirs, but his hope of glory and eternal bliss, of the triumphing of his nation and the casting down of the heathen and all other adversaries, to be God's footstool, was more fervent and more jubilant too. The defiance and bitterness that filled every noble Jewish soul of the time, fed a force of resistance and of indifference in Paul, that could ignore everything merely external, and fix itself on the hidden essentials.' [1]

Paul had, however, a very definite purpose in coming to Jerusalem. He came to be trained as a Rabbi. He therefore attended the daily disputations of the Scribes in the courts of the Temple, and there came under the influence of a discipline the marks of which persisted throughout his life. His mind was developed both in a formal and material way. He learned how to reason according to Rabbinical methods, and he became imbued with those views of God, Man, and the Universe which were particularly distinctive of the Judaistic theology of that day. Afterwards, even when he became a Christian, he never divested himself either of this Rabbinical manner of reasoning, or of the Judaistic outlook on the world and man. He remained in this part of his being essentially a Jew to the end. It is, therefore, important for us at this stage to study with care the discipline and teaching that he underwent in the schools of the Scribes at Jerusalem.[2]

[1] Weinel, *St. Paul, the Man and His Work.*

[2] *Cf.* Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, ii. 312–379.

These schools were peculiar to Judaism. Nothing quite like them has existed elsewhere. They were a comparatively late growth in the history of the religion of Israel, and can be traced directly to that devotion to the Law which increasingly became distinctive of Judaism after the return from exile. The place formerly occupied by the Temple, the ritual of sacrifice, and the priests among the Jews, gradually gave way to the institution of the Synagogue, the Law, and the Scribes. When Paul came to Jerusalem the Scribes were a most important and influential body, and had an undisputed sway over the education and the conduct of the people.

This change came about very naturally. In the days of Ezra the Law was mainly the concern of the priests, and emphasis was laid upon the sacrificial ritual of the Temple. The time came, however, when the importance of the sacrificial system receded, and those parts of the Law which dealt with life and conduct came into prominence. Every man began to have a personal interest in the Law, and this fact led directly to the institution of the Synagogue.

The Synagogue was primarily instituted, not for the worship of God, like the Church among Christians, but for the general instruction of the people in the Law. The class of the Scribes grew up in close connection with the Synagogue, and gradually became the real teachers of the people. The title usually given to them was 'Rabbi,' 'my master,' and they demanded a reverence and subservience of their pupils which exceeded that given to parents.

But this very importance in the community proved a snare to many of them. It led to pride and selfishness. 'All their work they do to be seen of

men ; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts and the chief seats in the Synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.'[1]

They made no charge for their teaching. Most of them had indeed other business occupations, but the Law remained the central interest of their lives. Still we find Jesus Christ condemning their covetousness in very plain terms, and consequently we conclude that in His time it was their general practice to compensate themselves in one way or another for their legal work. Almost all the Scribes belonged to the sect of the Pharisees.[2]

The duties of the Scribes were threefold : to instruct in the Law, to interpret the Law, and to act as judges among the people in matters concerning the Law. The Law itself was written, and was regularly read in the Synagogue in the hearing of the people. It was also systematically taught to the young, who were, as we have already seen in Paul's case, expected to learn it by heart.

But the chief work of the Scribes was the careful development of this written law by interpretation, and its application to the details of the daily life of the people. In this way, in the course of time, a mass of traditional interpretation arose, and this 'tradition of the fathers' became no less sacred and binding than the Law itself. It was here that one of the great points of cleavage between the Pharisees and Sadducees arose. The latter denied the authen-

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 5.

[2] We have no indications that either the Sadducees or the Essenes played any part in the development of Paul, though of course he must have been well acquainted with their tenets.

ticity and binding nature of all this traditional matter, and held that the Law of Moses itself alone was binding. This tradition consisted of maxims and rules for the conduct of life based on the Law and was handed down orally. The Scribes were the depositories of the tradition, and by the time of Paul so extensive had it become that it regulated and limited practically every ordinary daily action of the Jew. As Jesus Christ said, the Scribes 'bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders.' [1] It was easy for the Scribe thus to become an oppressor; for he was at once the interpreter and administrator of the Law.

Apart from this general work of teaching and administering the Law in the Synagogue throughout the land in connection with the Temple, there were special schools or colleges for the higher training of the Rabbis themselves and for their pupils. The usual meeting-place of these schools was the courts of the Temple, but there is evidence that soon after this time there existed also special places or institutions for this kind of instruction. Here the method of the Scribes was entirely one of oral disputation. The pupils sat around. The Rabbi repeated a portion of the oral law; and this was repeated after him by the pupils. In Rabbinical language the word 'to repeat' is the same as the word 'to learn.' The Rabbi next propounded a legal question based on the text to his pupils, and then proceeded to dispute on it after a given fashion. The pupils in turn were also permitted to propound questions to their instructors.[2]

[1] St. Luke xi. 46.

[2] *Cf.* the youthful Jesus 'in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.' St. Luke ii. 46.

The duties of the pupils were declared to be twofold. They had to keep everything faithfully in memory. 'He who forgets a tenet of his instruction in the Law, to him the Scriptures impute the wilful forfeiture of his life.'

They were also never to teach anything otherwise than it had been delivered to them. 'Everyone is bound to teach with the expression of his teacher.' The pupil is to be like 'a well-limed well which loses not one drop.' [1]

The nature of these disputations covered every interest of life and conduct from the most grave and serious to the most trivial. For example, the most minute rules were devised regarding the practice of prayer, regulating at once the manner, the times, and the subject-matter of prayer in the most mechanical fashion. Rules were also laid down for the keeping of the Sabbath, the work permitted and the work forbidden being carefully defined. The very distance a man might walk on the Sabbath was indicated. It is recorded that on one occasion the school of Shammai, a renowned Scribe of an earlier generation, when discussing the command as to preparing food on the Sabbath, gravely debated 'whether and under what conditions an egg laid on a holy day might or might not be eaten.'

It was this discipline of the Scribes that Paul sought for in Jerusalem in order to qualify himself to become a Rabbi. The words of the Law he had already learned at Tarsus. In Jerusalem he studied the wider application of the Law and tradition in the Rabbinical way at the feet of the Scribes.

It is recorded in the Book of Acts that he particularly attached himself to the Scribe Gamaliel.

[1] Schürer, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

Unfortunately we know but little about this illustrious man, whose personality undoubtedly must have had great influence on the character of the young Tarsian student. All that we do know of him redounds to his credit, and his name was held in much honour in contemporary Jewish literature.[1] He was a follower of the school of Hillel, which with the rival school of Shammai was famous in the previous generation. Unlike the rigorous method of Shammai, Hillel decided legal questions in a humane way, and it is even said that he was not averse to the influence of Greek culture. It is very probable that the dignified and moderate character of Gamaliel had a lasting and constraining influence on the excessive ardour and zeal of his young student, whose tendency at a not much later period leant towards becoming a religious fanatic. The steadying influence of a strong personality of this kind must indeed have been of priceless value to Paul amidst all the turbulence and violence of the thought and passions of his student days.

There is abundant evidence in the letters of Paul that this Rabbinical training had a very positive effect on his mind. It is not possible to come to a true understanding of much of his thought if we do not take this method of his reasoning and his whole mental outlook thus acquired into account. We must remember that his ways of thinking were not the same as our modern ways, and that consequently his thoughts have not the same significance for us

[1] He is mentioned twice in the Book of Acts. Acts xxii. 3, where we are told that Paul 'was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel and taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the fathers'; and Acts v. 34–39, where Gamaliel is recorded to have advised the Sanhedrim in a most moderate and liberal fashion to release the Apostles.

as they had for his contemporaries. Not a little of his thinking belongs almoſt inextricably to his own time and environment, and requires translating into our modern speech before we can truly appreciate its value. It is because this fact has been overlooked in the paſt by ſtudents of Paul, that much in his writing has been commonly set down as genuinely Pauline and therefore of Chriſtian origin, that really belongs to the Rabbinical thought of his day, and formed part of his original mental equipment. The careful ſtudy of Paul's thought from this point of view is a great desideratum of present-day hiſtorical theology. There is abundance of material to work upon in the Jewish literature of the time, but for our present ſtudy we muſt be content with pointing out the fact of this influence in the making of Paul, supplying only such illuſtrations of its effect in his thought as will give a general indication of its nature and extent.

Chapter IV: Paul's Mental Equipment

BEFORE proceeding, therefore, to trace out Paul's life and development as a Jewish Rabbi and as a Christian Apostle, it will be profitable for us to pause and review his mental outfit as he steps from youth into manhood. Generally speaking, at this stage of their lives men have already assimilated and made their own those general conceptions of the universe and of man which are characteristic of the thought of their generation, and which necessarily form the background of all their thinking. In this respect Paul's inheritance was very considerable, and exercised in his later days a great influence not merely on his mental habits but also on the substance of his thinking. Many of his interpreters have failed to do him justice through not giving this fact the attention that it deserves, and in consequence usually attribute to him a greater originality than was really his.

During his life Paul had large dealings with three very distinct and differing classes of men: with the Jews, both of Palestine and of the Dispersion; with Greek and Roman Pagans, who were identified with the highest culture and civilisation of his day; and with the semi-civilised, semi-paganised Orientals of Asia Minor. We trace mainly to his upbringing at Tarsus, and to the many universalising and humanising influences that he experienced there, the development in Paul of that sympathy and tact in his approach to every type of man, and of that intimate knowledge of men's motives and interests that enabled him so successfully to 'become all things to all men' in order to win their allegiance to his cause, or on occasion

to withstand them to the face, and effectively justify his mission and his message, when these were subjected to misrepresentation and opposition. To the same influence we also trace the growth of those splendid powers of statesmanship and generalship which blossomed forth in his later Christian days, especially in connection with the organisation, nurture, and discipline of the Christian churches which he founded.[1] This development we shall illustrate more in detail at a later stage in our study.

It is, however, mainly through his relations with Jews and Jewish Christians that we know Paul. Regarding that side of his personality that was turned towards non-Jews our sources of information are very meagre. It was indeed principally owing to the widening of his mission to comprehend the Gentile world that he was confronted with those great questions of doctrine and practical policy which he dealt with so fearlessly and effectively in his letters. But uniformly it was men of Jewish race that thus called Paul's widening of doctrine and policy in question; and it was to meet the Jewish standpoint that he wrote several of his most important letters in order

[1] *Cf. St. Paul and his Gospel*, by W. S. Swayne, pp. 3 and 4: 'The social preparation had been mainly the work of the Roman, the intellectual of the Greek, and the religious of the Jew. All these three influences met together in the person and character of Paul. He was to begin with a Roman citizen. . . . St. Paul was also, as was the case with all cultivated people of his time, much influenced by Greek culture, literature, and thought. . . . In any attempt, therefore, to estimate Paul's training and mental equipment, large allowance must be made for the elements he derived from the fact of his Roman citizenship and from his acquaintance with Greek culture. Nevertheless, it remains true that Paul was before all things a "Hebrew of the Hebrews." . . . Paul writes always not as a Greek philosopher, but as a Jewish Rabbi.'

to counteract the pernicious influence that his Jewish opponents were exercising among the Gentile converts. We are not surprised, therefore, to find him usually writing from a definitely Jewish point of view. The presuppositions of Pharisaic Judaism were often his starting-point; his intimate knowledge of the Law and tradition was his weapon, and his Rabbinical training frequently provided him both with the method and material of discussion.

It is therefore a peculiarly difficult task to gauge accurately to what extent Paul really remained a Jew in sentiment and mental outlook after he became a Christian. It may be very reasonably argued that the Judaistic positions he so often adopts in his letters are due merely to the nature of the subjects he had to deal with, and the predilections of those he wished to influence. Taking, however, all the evidence into consideration, it is most probable that while in his general outlook on the world Paul remained a genuine Jew for the most part to the end, in the field of his religious experience, and especially in his conception of the way of redemption, his thought travelled far beyond the range of Judaism.

In our study of Paul, therefore, we ought constantly to bear these two facts in mind. First, though we have a comparatively full account in his letters of his relations as a Christian to both Jews and Jewish Christians, we are left comparatively without means of information regarding his relations with non-Jews. What would we not give for a full account from his own pen of the method and contents of his preaching to pagans! For it was in this field—lost, alas! to us beyond recall—that the Apostle's true greatness found its richest fruitage.

The other fact is that in the past, owing mainly

to a lack of historical imagination and accurate knowledge, the Christian Church has received into popular Christian theology as Pauline, and therefore genuinely Christian, not a little of the Judaistic thinking and views of the world that prevailed in the Jewish circles of his day; whereas in reality these belong to the older religion.[1] Moreover, the difficulty of appreciating the true originality of Paul is not lessened, but made infinitely greater, by the fact that after his death many of the more fundamental principles of his thought were seized upon and developed into a system in the light of the experience and philosophy of later ages and alien peoples in a way that has caused the original significance of much of the Apostle's thought to be lost.[2]

The study of the Rabbinical literature of the first century is therefore very important for the true understanding of Paul and of the part he played in the early development of Christianity. Only after patient research in this literature, and careful comparison, will scholars be able to tell us the extent of Paul's heritage from Judaism, and thus enable us to distinguish in him what was definitely original and due to his contact with Jesus Christ. He himself tells us that this touch with Christ made him a new man. It also gave him new thoughts of God and man and man's destiny. These especially are the thoughts which, forged red-hot from the fire of his own experience

[1] *Cf.* such questions as the method of the entrance of sin into the world, the doctrines of the Messiah, of predestination, and of election.

[2] The Alexandrine Fathers, Augustine, and Luther have been chiefly responsible for this. Christian thinking has gained in part and lost in part thereby; but for the true valuation of not a little of our theology a resurrection of Paul's actual thinking in its original setting is a prime necessity.

of his Master, have proved instruments of such strength and illumination in all subsequent Christian thinking, and have gained for Paul the title of the Founder of Christian Theology.

Further, our study of Paul's upbringing and training ought to enable us to appreciate better the fact that his outlook on life was often in strong contrast to our modern outlook, and that consequently it is a very precarious procedure to attempt to systematise his thought or to reconstruct it on models of our age. Yet this is precisely what has been so often attempted in Pauline study. *Paul, however, did not construct a rounded system of thought in the modern sense, nor did he constantly observe those rules of consistency and uniformity of expression to which a modern writer is expected to conform.* He always wrote with a definite, practical aim in view, and this aim uniformly governed his mode of expression. Consequently if, in our desire of systematisation, we overlook his immediate purpose in writing, we are very liable to mistranslate or exaggerate his meaning. To understand him aright we shall have to make constant use of our powers of historical imagination and sympathy, and ourselves live as it were his life over again, and face with the same courage and sympathy his perils and his problems. In this way only shall we come to an understanding of the real Paul, and realise that for Christianity the Apostle's personality, what Christ made of the man, is infinitely of more importance than what is called Pauline doctrine and Pauline institutions.

When he left the schools of the Scribes and took his place in the Jewish world as a Rabbi of their religion, the most valuable asset of his heritage and training that he carried with him was *his belief in God.* First and foremost, he and his people believed in one God.

In his first letter to the Corinthians he writes: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, to us there is but one God, the Father, for whom are all things and we in Him.'[1] The contents of this belief in 'one God' have been summarised as follows: 'It is one God in whom their people believes, one God to whom it offers its sacrifices and prayers, one God, however many so-called gods there may be . . . for these are no gods, but angels or demons. One Will there is that rules, almighty, over the world; not a summary of blind natural forces, not the indivisible divinity of ancient philosophy, but a powerful, holy Person. He is indeed the Creator of the heaven and the earth, but He is not merely immanent in this creation, He rules over it with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. He has a history with humanity on earth. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of His people; a living God, Spirit and Will, not wood and stone like the popular gods of the heathen. And He has made Himself known to His people, and through them to all nations, by the prophets; there needs not to seek Him in vain disputes of rhetorician and philosopher in the wisdom of this world. And we know He works not blindly like the brute forces of nature, nor capriciously like the gods and goddesses of Greece and spoiled children of fortune! He is a God who will make manifest in tremendous judgment, that in His sight nothing stands higher than righteousness.'[2] Here is a noble heritage of belief, and one that has passed over into Christianity practically without change. The claim of the Jews, however, to possess this God in a special manner has not persisted. Paul himself led

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.
[2] Weinel, *St. Paul, the Man and His Work*, pp. 22, 23.

the way in repudiating the possibility of any special privilege of relationship to God based on birth or nationality, and in controversy he, on occasion, even attempted to turn the Jewish position by claiming this cherished privilege of the Jews for those who are Christ's.[1] The Gentile Christians were not slow to seize on and develop this thought of Paul, and to-day we are only reaching the consummation of this dialectic in our all too reluctant abandonment of the principle of an exclusive revelation of God to one chosen people or religion for that of one great and progressive development of revelation in the history of mankind.

Paul's cosmology was not so helpful to the permanence of his thought, for it belonged entirely to his own time, and has been long since superseded. To understand him in this sphere we have to think ourselves back into the range of his thought and picture the universe as a huge building in three stories. The lowest storey is the abode of the dead, a very shadowy reality; above this is the world of matter and of man, and above all the great vault of the heavens. God dwells in the highest heavens; Christ appears from the midst thereof, and angels and demons inhabit it. The heavens consist of dome upon dome, and are eternal, and to be desired of man as his highest destiny. Paul himself has been in the third heaven and heard there words that he cannot repeat.[2]

This earth for Paul was a small place, being practically limited to the confines of the Roman Empire. It was created by God, through the mediation of the Messiah,[3] who was conceived of

[1] Gal. iii.

[2] *Cf.* Phil. ii. 10, Rom. i. 18, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 1 Thess. i. 10, iv. 16, Gal. i. 8, 2 Cor. v., 2 Cor. xii. 2–4.

[3] Col. i. 16.

as an eternal Being living in the closest communion with God, but who for the salvation of men divested himself of his heavenly glory and became man on the earth.[1]

These thoughts all belonged to current Judaism, and Paul has introduced them into Christianity by using them in his interpretation of Jesus.

Like all his contemporaries, Paul believed in the existence and activity of spirits and demons. It is not easy for a modern Christian to grasp what this belief meant in the life of Paul; for faith in Jesus Christ has wellnigh destroyed for Christians the reality of this world of spirits and demons, and robbed them of all powers of bliss and terror. But those who live in the Orient to-day can find in the belief and practices of the peoples around them something of the state of mind that prevailed among the contemporaries of Paul The universe between God and man is filled with spirits, evil and good, and men believe that God uses these spirits in His governance of the earth and man. All evil is referred to the work of evil spirits. We have abundant evidence that in the days of Jesus and Paul this belief in spirits was widely current in Judaism, and more especially so in Pharisaic circles. We are therefore prepared to find indications in the letters of Paul which show that this belief was part of his heritage also. In the second letter to the Corinthians Paul speaks of *the god of this world* as blinding the hearts of unbelievers.[2] Elsewhere he speaks of *Satan* hindering him from visiting the Thessalonians,[3] and he attributes the peculiar malady which so often stood in the way of his work as 'a messenger of *Satan*.'[4] *Satan* he

[1] *Cf.* Phil. ii. 6, 7.
[2] 2 Cor. iv. 4.
[3] 1 Thess. ii. 18.
[4] 2 Cor. xii. 7.

explains as '*the prince of the power of the air*, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.'[1] Communion with these spirits is common among men through heathen sacrifices, which in reality are offered to devils. Nay, even Christians entered into this communion of devils if they knowingly partook of flesh sacrificed to idols.[2] Here Paul is living in a world of ideas which is in complete contrast to modern ways of thinking. But his instinct as a follower of Jesus Christ was prophetic of the modern view. He taught that Christ freed men from the power of demons, and that the name of Christ was powerful to subdue all such evil influences. 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'[3] The history of Christianity has shown conclusively that Paul was correct in this faith, for in Christendom to-day such belief in spirits and fear of their influence only exist as a relic among the ignorant.

Paul's conception of man has also many elements in it that belong to the thought of his time, and which are in contrast to our modern ideas. This remark applies especially to his pyschology of man, and to his belief as to the course of human history. We shall illustrate the latter point only. To the Jew human history has but two great moments, the present age and the future age or ages which are separated by a great catastrophe. During the present age, an evil age, men are under the dominion of sin, and of death, the consequence of sin. The coming of

[1] Eph. ii. 2. [2] 1 Cor. x. 20.
[3] Rom. viii. 38.

a Messiah, attended by great social and natural upheavals will usher in a new age of light, joy, and peace, ruled over by Him. In Paul's writing we find many reflections of these current beliefs, especially when he is led to speak of the future in an apocalyptic manner. The whole conception of Christ's second coming to reign in person on the earth, shared in universally by the primitive Church, belongs to this circle of ideas. There is evidence, however, to show that Paul's expectation of Christ's immediate return to earth weakened towards the end of his career, and today this belief only persists as a survival from Jewish expectations in certain circles of Christians who are not familiar with the movements of history. This range of thought, therefore, is parasitic in Christianity, being supported neither by the logic of history nor by the nature of spiritual religion.

Among other elements in Paul's thought which may be traced to his Rabbinical training may be included his conception of the entrance of evil into the world, and the manner of its spread among men; the thought of the privileges of the Jewish nation through birth and the promises to the fathers, which he sought by the power of his dialectic to transfer to Christians as the true children of Abraham;[1] and his doctrines of predestination, and of the absolute sovereignty of God, which have proved so fertile of discussion and conflict among theologians in later ages.

Finally, Paul was a true Jew to the end in his belief in a written, inspired revelation of God to the Jewish nation. The promises of God were delivered in a sacred book. The law 'was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.'[2] Paul believed with his fellow Jews that God 'at sundry times

[1] Rom. v. 12. [2] Gal. iii. 19.

and in divers manners spoke unto the fathers by the prophets,' and that there now remained to them the authoritative sacred book of the law and prophets. When he became a Christian he added to this belief faith in a personal revelation of the will of God to man through communion with Jesus Christ, His Son. Christianity has followed Paul both in his appeal to the Old Testament as Law, and in his faith in Christ as Revealer. There are in reality two conceptions of religion mingled here which have never quite been reconciled. The latter, of course, is distinctively Christian, while the former is a heritage from Judaism.

In his use and interpretation of the sacred Scriptures Paul was faithful to those principles that he had learned at the schools of the Scribes at Jerusalem. He constantly appealed to single texts as proof of his doctrines, and this appeal to the authority of the sacred Word was undoubtedly of the greatest value in dealing with Jewish objectors. But the Rabbinical method of proof is not always convincing to the modern mind. For example, in Gal. iii. 6 Paul wishes to prove that the promises of God belong to Christians and not to the Jewish nation, by showing that Christians are the true children of Abraham. In order to carry through his proofs from Scripture, however, he insists on the grammatical sense of the word 'seed,' doing violence to its real historical sense. Such a proof has, of course, no validity for modern readers.[1]

Interpretation of sacred texts through the methods of types and allegory played a large part in the Rabbinical schools. The principle underlying the former is that events happened in past history by way of type and 'are written for our admonition.'[2]

[1] Another similar example is found in Rom. ix. 25.
[2] 1 Cor. x. 11.

In modern days we derive many a lesson from history, but we do not believe that events happened and were recorded with us in view.

Paul's use of allegory may be studied in connection with the passages 1 Cor. ix. 8–16 and Gal. iv. 24. The root principle in allegory is that something more and deeper is hidden in the text than the meaning that the bare words convey. It is indeed an illuminating method when used for purposes of illustration, but as a method of proof it is utterly illegitimate. We find a similar method used in modern days in theosophy, much in the same way as it was used in early Christian days by the Alexandrines. It is to the credit of modern historical science that it has plainly exposed the dangers inherent in this method of interpretation.

One student of Paul has described him as having 'a logic of his own which differs essentially from ours.' For instance, it is a principle with him that 'what happens to the first of an historical series happens in consequence to the whole series. Adam is the head and spring of humanity. He represents the whole race of mankind.' What is true of him is, therefore, true of all that are connected with him. Since he dies, all who belong to his race die. Christ is again the first of a series. Therefore, since He arises from the dead, all rise with Him, simply on that account. When we ask why this is so, the modern mind fails to find a causal connection between these events. But Paul evidently sees in history 'a coherence and parallelism which he conceives to be necessary.' 'In other words, he thinks under a law that does not obtain for us.' [1]

We are justified in concluding, therefore, that from

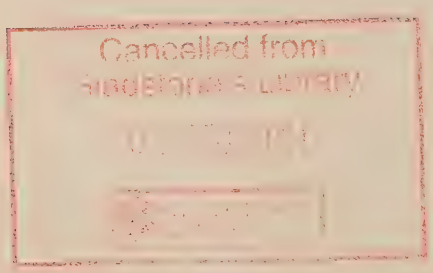
[1] *Cf.* Wrede, *Paul*, pp. 80–82.

our modern standpoint this heritage of Paul from Judaism was not all gain.

Still, in what we have said we have dwelt rather on the limitations imposed on him by his training than on the value of his inheritance. We have not, for instance, spoken of the great debt he owed to Jewish habits of piety, of the inspiration he drew from the prophets, and of the lofty morality that he was heir to. We have abstained from doing this designedly, for there has been hitherto too large a tendency among writers on Paul to emphasise the value of this inheritance without pointing out how it also limited him. Does this limitation reflect on the greatness of the Apostle? Nay; rather it enhances it, for his achievements transcended all his limitations, and to-day we can understand him better and more fully sympathise with him and appreciate his work because of them; for, after all, these limitations which we can detect in him afford but the natural evidence that his life was, in spite of his greatness, a truly human one, and akin to our own.

We do our thinking under different presuppositions. To us the universe is no longer geocentric, and 'heaven' not so simply located. Our earth is but a speck in a limitless universe, that has been in the process of becoming from limitless time, and all nature and man himself are subject to development in conformity with an universal natural law that has profoundly affected our way of looking at God and religion. Over against the urgency of the great consummation, the immediate coming of the Lord and His kingdom, in Paul's thought, we look still forward to a long history of mankind on earth. Paul's tremendous feeling of the transitoriness and worthlessness of the present age in view of the immediacy

of the new age has vanished, and the focus of our attention has been directed, not so much to a supernatural kingdom of God, as towards the will of God as active for the welfare of mankind and humanity. In the study of Paul this great transformation in the background of our thinking has not hitherto been sufficiently allowed for. Is it not an illegitimate process to transfer doctrine trimmed and hewn to fit one foundation to another and differing situation without first modifying its shape to fit the new conditions?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Chapter V: The Decisive Influence

IT is very probable that Paul, after completing his studies at Jerusalem, returned to his family and friends at Tarsus and began life there as a Rabbi. It is an attractive picture to think of him experiencing afresh the influences of Tarsus in the light of his Jerusalem training, and taking his share as a leader in the intellectual and social life of his native city. In any case it is certain that he cannot have been present in Jerusalem during the short ministry of Jesus and in the tragic days of His death and resurrection.

Why did he return to Jerusalem? His unbounded ambition and restless zeal could not abide satisfied with the opportunities of a provincial town. It is probable also that the perplexities and defeats of his inner personal life, hinted at in one of his letters[1] as a crisis that he had passed through, drove him back to Jerusalem for the encouragement of a more enthusiastic environment and the intercourse of kindred spirits. For to a Jew Jerusalem was at once the centre of his religion and of his national hopes. It was thither that the long expected Messiah would come and from thence the world-transforming influence of the new kingdom would radiate; and the eager spirit of Paul must needs be at this centre.

And here at Jerusalem he in a strange, unsought-for way became all unwittingly exposed to a new influence which in its own time proved decisive in his life. He met with Jesus Christ. At first and for a time his eyes were holden that he did not know

[1] *Cf.* Rom. vii. 25.

him, but while he used to commune and reason within himself about the strange things that were taking place in Jerusalem, Jesus Himself was drawing near, and all unknown to him was, as it were, walking by his side. Doubtless for many days before what is usually called his 'conversion,' his heart was burning within him; for, unless we recognise that Jesus was in this way walking by his side in those tragic days when he was persecuting the Church, we shall find the final scene of the revelation of Jesus on the way to Damascus quite unintelligible.

How are we to explain this momentous change in Paul's life? It is necessary first and foremost to concentrate our attention on the religious experience of the early Christian community, for that contains the key to our problem. We here for the first time encounter the fact of the new life that is mediated in the lives of men by Christianity, and our study becomes significant not merely for the understanding of Paul, but also for the grasping of what is essential in Christian experience. Jesus had said, 'Ye must be born again'; and in the religious experience of that seemingly insignificant group of Christian men and women, whom Paul first knew as their persecutor, a new life had indeed begun to appear. We come in touch here with something new in history, something unique, something creative, and of commanding influence; something, as Paul would say, '*from above*,' from which a new beginning was initiated in the history of religion. Contemporary testimony uniformly connects this new element in religious experience with the person of Jesus Christ; not, however, to the posthumous influence of a dead man, so much as to Him in a continued life as a risen Spirit, and as spiritual Lord in the lives of men. In this

connection the following words are worthy of our closest attention : 'What was written in the Gospels of the life and death of Jesus might by now be ancient history, if the Gospels had told the whole story. But they did not tell the whole story ; and they neither were, nor are, the source of the Christian movement, great as their influence is and has been. The Jesus who has impressed Himself upon mankind is not a character, however strong and beautiful, that is to be read about in a book. Before the Gospels were written, men spoke of the Spirit of Jesus as an active force amongst them. We may criticise their phrase and their psychology as we like, but they were speaking of something they knew, something they had seen and felt, and it is that "something" which changed the course of history. Jesus lives for us in the pages of the Gospels, but we are not His followers on that account, nor were the Christians of the first century. They, like ourselves, followed Him under the irresistible attraction of His character repeating itself in the lives of men and women whom they knew. Of His immediate followers we know almost nothing, but it was they who passed Him on to the next generation, consciously in their preaching, and unconsciously in their lives which He had transformed, which had gained from Him something of the power of His own life. The Church was a nexus of quickened and redeemed personalities, men and women in whom Christ lived. So Paul wrote of it. A century later another nameless Christian spoke of Christ being new born every day over and over again in the hearts of believers, and it would be hard to correct the statement.'[1]

[1] Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, p. 139.

The principle of the rise and spread of Christianity was thus not the apotheosis of a dead hero—a process familiar in the history of religion—but the revelation of the Son of God in the lives of men, the rebirth in the human soul of the consciousness of an indwelling divine power. Paul's genius found its occasion in the fact that he was the earliest Christian to become fully conscious of this new life energising within him, who possessed the natural ability to develop it and to explain it in terms of current thought to his contemporaries, and who thus introduced it into the lives of countless others.

Can Paul's conversion and subsequent life be explained apart from positing the reality of this indwelling force which he interpreted as the active presence of Jesus Christ?

The various influences that bore on him in his youth and training do not supply us with anything to explain the sudden and great change in his life. Thousands of others were subject to just the same influences—influences of heredity, of Greek and Pagan environments, of Jewish tradition and training—but none of them became, like him, pioneers in a new religious life. Why did Paul, unlike them, not remain on the beaten track? The answer to this question is concealed in hidden relations between Paul the persecutor and the Christians whom he persecuted. Through these relations Jesus Christ finally became revealed in his consciousness.

After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, His followers—mainly a group of Galilean peasants—came to Jerusalem and lived there quietly in vivid expectation of His return as the Christ to reign over the traditional Messianic kingdom. They were a simple folk and lived a simple life in the fulness of a naïve faith

that Jesus was the Messiah. They had all things in common. As good Jews they kept the feasts, attended the Temple daily, and gained the approbation of men for their piety according to the Jewish ritual. But in addition to these Jewish observances they met daily in an upper room, a private house—where 'they all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.' It was in connection with this practice that the simple rites of the Christian Church—baptism on entrance, and the ceremonial breaking of bread for remembrance—began to be practised. This was the beginning of Christian worship—primarily an addition to the pious ritual of the Jews, prompted by desire of communion with their departed, but much longed for, Master.

During one of these prayer seasons, this small company of the followers of Jesus became aware of a sudden mighty inrush of spiritual power into their lives. They immediately connected this influence with the spirit of the risen Jesus. Onlookers were amazed at the external manifestations of this new religious power in men, and began to ask one another 'what meaneth this?' The immediate result was twofold. It led to a wonderful deepening of the zeal and boldness of the immediate followers of Jesus; and it also led to a rapid and striking increase in their number. Where formerly there was only an insignificant handful of peasants who were popularly regarded as having peculiar views about the Messiah, now thousands confessed Jesus as Messiah, and *immediately experienced the power of His Spirit in their lives.* The Jewish authorities, who at first had been tolerant of the new sect, began to be alarmed at its wonderful vitality, and a movement for its repression was started among them. It is instructive, however,

to notice the impression that some of the leaders of the Christians made on an educated man like Gamaliel. His advice was to let the Christians alone. Time would declare whether the movement was of God or not.[1]

But just as soon as the new religion began to burst the bonds of Judaism and to declare its independence, opposition and persecution broke out. This development came about in a very simple way. Many Jews, who lived outside the bounds of Judæa, mainly in the large Greek cities, and who had come from various parts of the Roman Empire to take part in the national worship of the Temple, became affected by the Christian movement and adopted the new faith. In the vividness of their expectations of the immediacy of the Lord's return they remained at Jerusalem, but were held to the orthodox observance of the Jewish rites by a much looser bond than their Palestinian brethren. They thus soon became the progressive party among the followers of Jesus.[2] From this time dates the earliest sign of that cleavage in the Christian community which afterwards became of such tragic significance to the work of Paul. The new religion could not be confined within the shell of Judaism. It contained the seeds of a universal faith. The evangelist Stephen was the earliest to voice decisively this larger import of Christianity, and he boldly subjected current Judaism to a free and destructive criticism. This led inevitably to fierce disputations with the Jews, and finally to violent action on their part. Stephen suffered martyrdom, but left the larger ideal of a free religion as his heritage to the Church. Paul was present when they stoned him ; but how much the martyr's words and manner of death impressed his imagination we can only conjecture. Did he have his first vision of

[1] Acts v. 34–40.

[2] *Cf.* Acts vi.

Jesus at this time and thrust it from him? It is remarkable that the charge brought against Stephen was the same charge that had been made against Jesus; the dying prayer of Jesus as He went up to His death was identical with the dying prayer of Stephen, and the spirit of the cross of Jesus was repeated in the stoning of the martyr. It is most probable that this whole scene occasioned questionings and perplexities in the mind of Paul that were only solved later in the light that came to him in the revelation of Jesus Christ in him on the road to Damascus.

Most likely Paul had not been long in Jerusalem when this movement among the Christians, led by Stephen, had begun to attract the notice of the authorities, and steps for its repression were being organised. We know that he consented to Stephen's death, and shortly afterwards took the lead in checking the growth of the Church. Can we trace the effect that this first contact with Christianity had on Paul's mind? He was a Jew, young, energetic, zealous for the Law, and passionately attached to the hopes of the coming of a heavenly Messiah, who should usher in the glories of the Messianic kingdom at Jerusalem. This faith was as it were bred in his very blood and bones, and he lived but for its realisation. He was ready if called on to die for it. At this stage of his life even a small incentive might have transformed him into a violent religious fanatic.

We can, however, detect another element in his experience which had a fundamentally disquieting influence on his life. He had a profound sense of defeat in his inner life. From references in his letter to the Romans[1] we know that at one stage in his life he passed through a period of doubt; and we

[1] *Cf.* Rom. vii.

have already conjectured that it was the exigencies of this agony of soul that drove him to return to Jerusalem. He was finding the perfect keeping of the Law to be not merely a burden, but an impossibility. Paul never juggled with his conscience. Above most men he was honest with himself. He knew of the struggle within, and of the many defects of the human will. He became obsessed with the sense of both personal and national failure. His whole Pharisaic faith tended to become undermined. Every Pharisee believed that the coming of the Messiah (for which only he lived) depended on the national keeping of the Law ; and in these days Paul began to realise that in this not only he failed, but the very best of his fellow Pharisees failed also. His soul alternated with hope and fear.

Now the first effect of such a state of mind on an earnest energetic personality is still more to stir his energy. He must do something great for God, he must compensate for his failings, and by the excess of his devotion cover up his own and others' defects and mistakes.

Whether we are right or not in discovering in this disquietude of mind the secret of Paul's return to Jerusalem, there is little doubt that it was motives of this nature that led him to become the persecutor of the Christian Church. One can easily understand how abhorrent to his mind the faith of the Christians must have been so long as he held to the Pharisaic ideal of life.

Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah of Jewish hope and prophecy ! A malefactor, a dead man, a man too who had died the accursed death of the cross ! Such a faith was blasphemy against the Holy God of Israel, and merited death ! So Paul, as he afterwards confessed

in his letter to the Galatians, 'beyond measure persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it,' thinking that in so doing he was doing a service to God.[1]

In the period immediately preceding his conversion Paul was thus subjected to two powerful streams of influence. The one tended to be of a negative character, leading him to doubt and distrust his ancestral religion. The other was of a distinctively positive kind and led him to examine and covet that courage and inward calm which he perceived to be the mark of the Christians whom he persecuted. These influences we shall now attempt to analyse and understand, for they furnish the clue to the only satisfactory explanation of that striking crisis of Paul's life, which was precipitated on his memorable journey to Damascus. On the one hand the strong nature and clear-seeing honest mind of Paul refused to be satisfied with the current ideals of Pharisaism. His nature was essentially a religious one, and he could tolerate no subterfuge in that sphere of life. *Nothing short of an actual possession of God Himself could meet the needs of this earnest seeker.* Pharisaic Judaism at its best was the religion of hope. The Pharisees lived in the present for the future. God was not now in their midst, but some day the golden age would appear. In that day Jehovah, either Himself, or in the person of His Messiah, would manifest Himself out of heaven, and intervene in the affairs of men, in the interests of His people Israel. Till then this people's duty was the Law and the ritual. Mere hope, however, could not satisfy Paul; he was impatient for realisation. Strenuously he had walked till now along the path of the Law, and by a perfect obedience had sought to hasten the coming of the golden age. But to him

[1] Gal. i. 13.

and to his people Jehovah tarried long. They still thought of Him as afar off in heaven, and were more sensible of His anger and retribution for broken Law than of His presence and His love. Thus as Paul looked around on the lives of his countrymen, and inwardly into his own heart, he could not but recognise that, if God were to be found only by the way of perfect obedience to a written Law, then neither he nor his people were likely to win Him. Discouragement, defeat, and despair seemed the only outcome of his effort. Nor did his feverish activity as a persecutor bring peace to his soul. He found, as all men find, that the service of despair and fear will not bring God near to men.

On the other hand, Paul's contact, even as a persecutor, with the followers of Jesus affected his life in a very positive way, and gradually led to a subconscious rearranging of all his thoughts about the relations between God and men. The revelation of Jesus Christ in him on the road to Damascus proved the keystone to this new upbuilding of his mental life, which at once unified and gave clear meaning to all the vague new thoughts that were welling up into his consciousness. The certainty suddenly realised that Jesus was alive and in communion with men proved to him such an overpowering revelation of the reality of the Divine presence that he was dazzled and for the time almost paralysed in his physical nature. All was Light, excess of Light ; a revelation of the Divine nature that shut his eyes to all external phenomena. He awoke to find God in his life as a present reality. He knew himself to be a new creature, with a new attitude to God, a new feeling for men, and an overpowering compulsion to a totally new kind of service of God and men.

If we are correct in this psychology of the conversion of Paul, then we are right, in our explanation of the crisis of his life, to give emphasis to the fact that in his case also it was the new life of Christianity energising in the lives of the early followers of Jesus Christ that caught and held his attention, and finally opened the door of his heart to the vision of the continued life and lordship of Jesus Christ in human life. Antagonism gradually gave way to interest, and interest led to conviction. The claims of these Christians he indeed at the first abhorred. To a Pharisee they must have sounded blasphemous. But whence the strength and tender grace and peace that characterised the lives of these men? Their gentleness was coupled with steady courage, humility with a divine boldness; an utter unworldliness did not lead to quietism, for energy was the mark of their daily life; brotherly love prevailed with an earnestness and a reality that fast tended to widen their human regard to a universal range. Not in word, but in deed, did these despised Christians love men. But, perhaps, more than all these characteristics of early Christian life, their fearlessness and strange supernatural cheerfulness in the face of persecution and a cruel death caught the attention and fired the imagination of their persecutor, ever since the day that he stood by, a consenting witness to the martyrdom of Stephen.

In one of his very few autobiographical references Tertullian has given an illuminating description of the manner in which the firmness of the early Christians in the face of persecution and martyrdom affected the serious minded among their persecutors. 'That very obstinacy, with which you taunt us, is your teacher. For who is not stirred by the contemplation of it to find out what there is in the thing

within? Who, when he has found out, does not draw near; and then when he has drawn near, desire to suffer, that he may gain the whole grace of God, that he may receive all forgiveness from Him in exchange for his blood?' Again he says: 'None the less this school (secta) will never fail—no! you must learn that it is built up the more when it seems to be cut down. Every man, who witnesses this great endurance, is struck with some misgiving, and is set on fire to look into it, to find what is its cause; and when he has learned the truth, he instantly follows it himself as well.'

These words seem exactly descriptive of what happened in the case of Paul. He tells us in one of his letters[1] that he did not receive the gospel which he preached from man, nor was he taught it from the lips of others, but it came to him through the revelation of Jesus Christ. This statement is followed by a sketch of his life, showing how Jesus Christ was revealed in him. His persecuting zeal, begun in the quest for inward peace, had resulted only in making him uneasy. In spite of his horror of their blasphemous claims for their dead leader, Jesus, he did not feel sure about these Christians. The very men whom he harried and scourged seemed to him to possess that peace of soul which he was in search of. Their courage and firmness became his teacher. He looked deep into their lives and there learned the truth, and instantly followed it. The Christ that energised in them became revealed in his own soul. It was this truth that came to him in a sudden flash of illumination on the way to Damascus. Luke's account of this moment in Paul's life in the Book of the Acts may indeed be given in language that appealed more to his own generation than it does to ours, but it conveys

[1] Gal. i. 12–24.

the central fact of Paul's experience very accurately. Suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven; he heard a voice saying unto him, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' And he said, 'Who art thou, Lord?' and He said, '*I am Jesus.*'

Much has been written as to what really happened during Paul's journey to Damascus. Too often a disproportionate amount of attention has been fixed on the purely external events and accompaniments of the Apostle's experience, with loss to its real significance. Interest has mainly centred around two closely connected problems—the trustworthiness of the narratives in the Book of the Acts, and the nature of the appearance of Jesus to Paul.

The three accounts in the Book of the Acts contain certain differences in detail which cannot be reconciled. The important variations are the following: In chapter ix. there is no mention of Paul's call to apostleship. In chapter xxii. this call is connected with a later vision on the road. Again, the statements as to what Paul's associates saw and heard vary in the three accounts. But in the central kernel of the story there is harmony;—Paul, surrounded by supernatural light, was aware of a presence, and heard a voice which said, 'Saul, why persecutest thou me?' 'I am Jesus.'

What Paul himself says in the few references in his letters to this great event in his life is of primary importance in this inquiry. He emphasises two facts: he has seen the Lord, and received from Him his call to apostleship. 'Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen the Lord Jesus?'[1] Jesus Christ's appearance to him was analogous to his appearance to the other Apostles.[2] The revelation of Jesus Christ

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 1. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 5–8.

was essentially a spiritual fact. 'But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son *in me*, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I conferred not with flesh and blood.'[1] In another place he speaks of 'God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, *who shined in our hearts*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'[2]

These facts of Paul's testimony are quite plain and conclusive. He never had the slightest doubt that he saw Jesus, Whom up to this time he had regarded as a dead man, alive and speaking to him. Formerly His enemy, he now unconditionally surrendered his life to Him, and received from Him a call to a new service. On the reality and significance of this appearance of Jesus to him his whole after life and work were based. Apart from it these are capable of no explanation.

Many attempts have been made to reduce this experience of Paul's to a mere subjective vision with no reality outside the contents of his own mind. It is said that his temperament was conducive to such a vision, and that the current Messianic expectations contained the materials which were necessary to make up the vision. Paul's conversion, it is alleged, when analysed, needs nothing outside his own consciousness to explain it. To the man of Paul's day there was indeed no difficulty in conceiving of an objective manifestation from the heavenly world. The air was peopled with angels and spirits, and the appearance of a heavenly Messiah was itself a long expected event. The naïve narrative in the Book of the Acts has as its presupposition a mental atmosphere of this kind, and

[1] Gal. i. 12–17. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 6.

cannot be truly appreciated without a constant reference to it.

But for us to-day modern science has created a very different mental world, which knows nothing of supernatural beings, or of manifestations from heaven. Nor can the scientific mind admit of such as realities, if the spiritual facts of religion are left outside of the boundaries of science as they too often are. In this way the prevalence of a scientific method that is too purely physical has led to the creation in modern days of a mental atmosphere that is quite the antithesis of the simple outlook of Paul's day; and the men of to-day are not inclined to admit of supernatural factors entering into human experience without the support of very positive evidence. This fact, and not merely the fact that there are variations in the narratives, is at the root of all the distrust of Luke's accounts in the Book of the Acts, where Paul's experience is described in terms of the popular belief of his day.

The phenomena of history, however, will not submit to be judged by the rigid method of physical science, and the so-called scientific attitude of late years is itself as one-sided as the attitude of naïve faith which it has displaced. There is a method of valuing the facts of history which is truly scientific, in which each fact is allowed to speak for itself, and is not lightly put aside because it does not conform to alien scientific presuppositions. The resurrection of Jesus, the phenomena of the new life energising in His followers after He left the earth, Paul's critical experience on the journey to Damascus, and his constant witness to the presence of Jesus in his life ever after, are all well-established historical facts that cannot be ignored. Nor are these isolated facts depending for verification only on the evidence of external witnesses. They

are interdependent facts, and serve to explain one another. Not only so, but well-attested facts of an analogous nature have again and again occurred in the history of Christianity; and only those who, before examining the facts, are persuaded on metaphysical grounds that there is no God, or that if God exists He does not have converse with men, will find a refuge or an explanation of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus in the theory of a purely subjective vision.

It is, however, quite a different matter when we ask in what form did Jesus appear to Paul. Here there is room for difference of opinion, and each one will judge in keeping with his general view of the universe, and his own personal experience of religion. The safest guide to follow is Paul's own testimony. He nowhere himself professes to give a definite account of the event, and only refers to it allusively here and there in his letters. From what he does tell us, however, we are certain that Paul never doubted that he had really seen Jesus. In the letter to the Galatians he clearly implies that the appearance of Jesus to him was similar to His appearances to the other Apostles. He was sure that he saw the Lord in some visual form. But it is quite as certain that it was not in the material human body that Jesus stood before Paul. For Paul did not believe in the resurrection of the flesh. He strongly held that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit eternal life.' The body of flesh Jesus had laid aside at death. The new body of Jesus was what Paul would have called a 'heavenly body.' For he ascribes a spiritual immaterial body to those who have risen from the dead.[1] We are here on strange ground, but we can only conclude that on the way, as he neared Damascus, Paul was deep in thought, and, perhaps,

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 5.

questioning himself in regard to his attitude to the Christians whom he was persecuting. Suddenly he was aware of a radiant light, and of the Presence of One from the heavenly world. Like a flash he realised that Jesus, the despised and crucified Nazarene, was alive and present in spiritual form, and that it was He who was energising in the community of the Christians, and was the Author of their new life and inner peace. The kingdom of heaven in this way had already begun on earth. The Messiah was present with men and His reign on earth begun. Before the vividness of this vision the self-reliance and pride of the Pharisee disappeared in utter self-surrender. He cries out, 'What shall I do, Lord?' At that moment the Spirit of Jesus was revealed in him, and he became what he himself calls 'a new creature.' His whole nature was transformed and renewed, and from this time forward his inner experience was expressed in these words, 'Not I, but Jesus Christ, dwelling in me.'

In modern days the psychology of the subliminal consciousness has been attractively used to explain the manner of Paul's conversion. It is pointed out that the materials for the vision of Christ pre-existed in the Messianic theories of the Rabbinical schools with which the mind of Paul was stored. Added to this the spiritual efficacy of the lives of the followers of Jesus was making a profound and perhaps partly an unconscious impression on his mind. In the crisis on the road to Damascus his mind became focussed on the identity of the spiritual Christ with the Rabbinical Messiah. The result was a fusion of these ideas and the sudden transformation of Paul's whole outlook with its vivid accompaniments.

The point to be emphasised here is that this theory

implies the reality of the influence of the spiritual Christ working in the community of Christians, and thus finally affecting the change in Paul. The hypothesis is indeed more in keeping with Paul's own method of thinking than the more crude theory of a material Christophany. It is true that what is commonly called the subliminal consciousness is after all only a storehouse of past impressions and experiences which flow beneath the surface of the waking consciousness, and which are liable to be thrown up into the front of our consciousness at any moment. But it is arbitrary to exclude the operations of the Spirit of God (or what Paul would call the indwelling Christ) from this sphere. Rather the whole subsequent history of Paul, and his uniform testimony to the presence of Christ in his life, suggest that it is quite probable that the Spirit of Christ used the content of what in modern phrase is called his subliminal consciousness to achieve the spiritual crisis of the Damascus road. And if our suggestion that the new life which was being mediated in the lives of early Christians was having a gradual and silent influence in the mind of Paul, in the language of religion this may well be interpreted as the presence of the Christ working in the subconscious mind of Paul even before the crisis of his life ; and the latter may be explained as the sudden emergence into consciousness of the hitherto unrecognised spiritual presence of Him who thereby became Lord of the saint's life. This line of thought undoubtedly opens a wide door to fruitful speculation ; but, while few will deny the reality of the touch of the Divine in human life, not many will be prepared to dogmatise on the manner of it in each individual case. 'The Spirit bloweth where it listeth.'

So sudden and overwhelming a spiritual crisis

may well have had the physical accompaniments described in the Book of the Acts, but these are the accidents and not the kernel of the experience of Paul. In the past too much attention has been paid to them, and we gain nothing by isolating the experience of Paul from the experience of other men. The uniqueness of his conversion consisted in part in the dramatic suddenness of the crisis and the vividness of the vision, and in part in the fact that Paul's was fundamentally a spiritual and not primarily a moral regeneration. Its essence was not an external miracle, calculated to convince others, but an internal revelation ; and at the centre of that revelation there lay, not a body of new knowledge, but an ever present and self-communicating Person.

PART TWO

Chapter I: Apostle or Thinker

AFTER his experience on the road to Damascus, Paul's life took a new and definite direction; and our first interest is to inquire into the guiding principle in this fresh departure. The common view is that Paul's supreme motive was mainly an intellectual one; and his gospel is ordinarily represented as doctrine. But this view is not satisfactory. We ask what was fundamental in his life as a Christian. Was it his *Thought* or his *Apostleship*? He himself declares he was *called to be an Apostle* of Christ Jesus through the will of God.[1] Does this mean that it was supremely an intellectual appreciation of what had happened to him that drove him out into the wide world to preach, and to organise on this basis? Or did not his thought interpretative of Jesus Christ come to him progressively in the course of his apostolic activity, being necessitated by it? Was his gospel primarily a doctrine or a life? On the answer to these questions will depend the method of our further study of Paul.

It is a commonplace among students of Paul to represent his object in going to 'Arabia'[2] immediately after his conversion as seeking 'a period of quiet for reflection.' 'In the months of solitude in Arabia, his soul alone with God, he meditated on the revelation made to him, and his distinctive Gospel took its shape.' 'He went into retirement for the purpose of grasping in thought the details and the bearings of the revelation

[1] 1 Cor. i. and *passim*. [2] Gal. i. 17.

he had been put in possession of, and when he returned to mankind he was in possession of that view of Christianity which was peculiar to himself and formed the burden of his preaching during the subsequent years.' [1]

The conception underlying this, the traditional, interpretation of Paul's history, is that what is fundamental in his gospel and preaching was a rounded body of doctrine regarding Christ and His relations to men. His apostleship was the result of his thought, and necessitated by it.

We are, however, convinced that this reading of Paul's Christian life is not only mistaken,[2] but is mainly responsible for much of that mistrust of Paul which is characteristic of not a few among modern Christians. Many serious students can only see in him the destroyer or the perverter of the simplicity of the gospel of Jesus. Such, however, have always interpreted the Apostle's life by his thought, and not his thought by his life. But it is a mistake to consider Paul as primarily a theologian and secondarily a prophet of religion. The true view is that Paul is primarily and wholly a prophet of

[1] Stalker, *The Life of St. Paul*, p. 70; *cf.* also Pfleiderer, *Christian Origins*, pp. 167–169. 'Paul's historical achievement certainly does not rest upon his pious emotions but upon his theological thoughts.'

[2] *Cf.* Julicher, *Introduction to New Testament*, p. 36: 'A singular hypothesis has been put forward, based on the "immediately" of Gal. i. 16, and on the similarity with which Paul describes his sojourn in Arabia, and that which took place afterwards in Syria, that he spent these three years in solitude in the Arabian desert, silently meditating on his experience, or developing undisturbed his peculiar system of doctrine—as though "Arabia were mere desert, and Paul's vocation that of a scientific theologian." No, a definite office had been laid on him in his vision, and Paul was not the man to hesitate an instant in the discharge of all the duties of that office.'

religion ; and that his theological thought is incidental to the prophetic work he had in hand. How the mistaken view arose is of easy explanation.

Most students of Paul have concentrated their attention mainly on a literary study of his extant letters. Their method has been that of the study and lamp-light. Consequently the real range and the character of these letters have been almost uniformly overlooked. Paul himself has been estimated mainly from his letters, while the conception of the world that he moved in has been drawn entirely from contemporary literary remains. But Paul can be better *understood* from a study of the social customs and habits of the Levantine people of to-day than from a study of an ancient literature which at best reflects the life of only one class of a very varied society. The market place at Tarsus, the long, toilsome and dangerous road up through the plain of Pamphylia over the rocky passes of the Tarsus to Pisidian Antioch, the little Jewish synagogue in any considerable Eastern town—this is the setting to study Paul in, if we are to understand the religion that moved him and the forms of expression that he gave to it.[1]

But unfortunately the study of Paul has been largely confined to the account given of him by Luke in Acts and a few of his own letters. Students have fixed their attention somewhat exclusively on his thought world, and in consequence they have systematised his thought where there was no system, and discovered in Paul the Apostle supremely a logician, and a master of dialectic. The gospel he preached is defined to consist of several great doctrines or principles, many implications of which baffle even acute thinkers of modern days. His supreme achieve-

[1] *Cf.* Deissmann, *St. Paul,* chapter ii.

ment is explained to have been the organising of Christian communities over a wide area on the basis of these doctrines, and the administration of the life of the communities by an appropriate form of government, discipline, worship, and sacrament. Paul is usually described as the first great Christian theologian and ecclesiastic.

This view of the Apostle's life and work has indeed had a most stimulating effect in awakening and developing the intellectual and institutional element in Christianity, and has led both in ancient and modern times to the formulation of admirable doctrinal statements and speculative systems and ecclesiastical organisations in connection with the Christian religion. Still it is undoubtedly based on two inherent errors. An unjustifiable use has been made of the letters of Paul. These are not literary productions meant for general use, but *genuine letters*. They are the personal correspondence of a man, Paul, to an individual or individuals with whom he had mutual interests. In the intention of their author they had no further reference than to the persons to whom they were addressed, and no further application than to the circumstances and problems that formed the occasion of writing. These facts ought to be determinative in our interpretation of their contents. It is not fair to Paul to use these letters as literary documents, or to interpret them without strict reference to the circumstances of the writer and of those whom he addressed. Moreover, what we possess of Paul's letters to-day is only a fragment of his correspondence, and at best a small fragment. He wrote many letters which are lost, and behind these letters in the minds of his correspondents was the mass of instruction contained in

his missionary preaching, of the contents of which we know scarcely anything. We should not have the materials, therefore, for constructing the whole system of Paul's thought, if he ever had one, which is very doubtful. For the rounded system of thought, the logical whole, was not characteristic of the thought either of Paul or his contemporaries. This is a demand of the mind of the modern scientific man. We shall better understand the kind of man Paul was if, abandoning the attempt to systematise his thought, we cultivate the habit of contemplating him in the immediate environment of his everyday work, and especially in his relations to the various types of mind that he had to deal with in his apostolic activity. We shall then understand how it is that he often gives alternative interpretations on different occasions to practically the same problems.

'Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, that I might gain them that are without law. . . . I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.'[1] Place yourself with Paul before an audience of Jews in Jerusalem, of Hellenistic Jews in Antioch, of Pagans in Galatia, or of cultured Greeks at Athens or Corinth, and realise for yourself the various types of thought represented in the minds of his hearers to which he had to relate his gospel if it was to be intelligible to them, and you will understand why Paul is altogether another type of thinker from the modern scientific philosopher who bases all his teaching on a completed and generally accepted view of the universe. Paul never had the future generation of

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21.

Christians or the circle of his learned commentators in view when he dictated these letters that tell us so clearly what manner of man he was, but refuse to make him like one of ourselves, a slave to logic and self-consistency. It was to a community that held 'not many wise,' 'not many mighty,'[1] but many that the world reputed foolish and weak; to slaves, freedmen, artisans, simple men and women of the lower middle classes (from whom in the main his converts were drawn), that he wrote these earnest, strong, passionate, and love-breathing letters in terms that such men could understand. What Paul himself would think of the systems of theology that have been built upon his words one cannot even conjecture. As Dr. Deissmann in his recently published illuminating study of Paul points out, 'the doctrinaire study of St. Paul has left one great riddle unsolved: the open question how far the "Paulinism" of its discovering was the seat of these vital forces which were bound to have a missionary effect because they carried away the simple folk of the ancient Mediterranean world. I am afraid the people of Iconium, Thessalonica, and Corinth would all have been overtaken by the fate of Eutychus of Troas[2] if they had been obliged to listen to the Christological, hamartiological, and eschatological passages of modern "Paulinism."'[3]

What then was 'the seat of those vital forces' in Paul? Paul himself furnishes us with the answer to this question. Harking back in thought to the Day of Damascus, he said, 'It pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen.'

The secret of Paul's apostleship lay not in himself, nor in the Christ of history, thought of as a personality

[1] 1 Cor. i. 26.
[2] Acts xx. 9–16.
[3] Deissmann, *St. Paul*, p. 6.

separate from his own, but in the vital union of Paul and the living Christ. It has always been so in the history of Christianity. The true missionary is pre-eminently a Christ-inspired, Christ-driven man. What is fundamental in Paul the Christian is his personal experience of Christ; his apostolic labours follow inevitably as a consequence. His thought, coming last in order, was generated in the closest connection with the practical details of his apostolic life.

In this way the Pauline communities were called into being and held together, not by a body of doctrine delivered to them and held in common, but by the love and grace and power of God revealed through the indwelling of Jesus Christ in a man, who yielded himself and his great natural gifts unreservedly to the Divine influence. Paul himself thus became 'an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.'[1] The power of the life characteristic of the heavenly world, the Spirit of God (whom Paul uniformly identified with the living Christ) so vitalised and rendered effective his life, not by destroying, but by truly developing, its humanity, that it reached out and ministered to the awakening of the same life in others, with the result that they too shared in the vital experience of the Christian life.

The greatness of Paul as an apostle was manifested in this extraordinary power which he possessed of attracting and inspiring men. A strong inner compulsion, manifested outwardly in an untiring, restless energy that no obstacle could baffle, thrust him out in travel practically to the ends of the then known world. His wonderful personal graces of love and tenderness won him friends wherever he went, and his

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 2.

jealous zeal for his converts' welfare, protection, and spiritual perfection, manifested now in frequent fervent intercession and prayer on their behalf, now in passionate denunciation and even angry upbraiding of those who in the interest of traditional rites or vain speculation were attempting to undermine the simplicity of their faith, secured for him an almost parental influence over them. No hardship or danger ever stood in the way of his service to men, and the record of his endurance and sufferings, in travel and at the hands of fanatical men, gives to his life an almost superhuman aspect. This man, to all outward seeming an insignificant artisan travelling on foot through the great cities of the Eastern Roman Empire, but inwardly a great complex volcanic personality, comprehending indeed and sympathising with much of the pulsating life of the countries which he visited, but above all else on fire with the flames of a new religion that was destined to change the face of the whole world, kindled the imagination and elicited the faith of a small group of insignificant men and women in each of the cities he visited, who thereupon immediately began to realise the same experience of vital union with the living Christ that the Apostle himself manifested. Herein lies the secret of the rapid expansion of Christianity. All who knew and read this Master-epistle of Jesus Christ themselves straightway became effective epistles of the same Lord, to be known and read of others. Paul in this way left the principle of self-reproduction in every true member of each of the little Christian communities he founded.

All throughout his apostolic career Paul acted from this sense of inner compulsion. We can discover no initial reasoned plan of campaign in his work, nor any stereotyped method in his teaching. On

the contrary his consciousness of a free and all-compelling force within was both constant and vivid, 'Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.' [1] He is an apostle 'not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ.' [2] The light in which he regards this inspiration is very clearly indicated in the fifth chapter of the second letter to the Corinthians. 'Wherefore we labour. . . . We persuade men . . . for the love of Christ constrains us : . . . we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you be ye reconciled to God.' He claims none of the glory for himself. 'Not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

The right method therefore in our study of Paul, the Christian, is to examine first the nature of the change in Paul's life both on its subjective and objective sides—the indwelling of Christ, and the resultant new man. Next in order should be examined the outward expression of his religion in the development of his marvellous apostolic labours ; his journeys and preaching ; his dealing with men ; the founding of churches and the provision for their government and growth. Finally we shall have to appreciate his thought life in its appropriate setting as an element of his apostolic activity.

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 16. [2] Gal. i. 1.

Chapter II: The Nature of the Change in Paul

ALL religion may be described as man's search after God, and witnesses to the truth that in every man's being there is that which cannot be satisfied apart from God. 'O God,' cries Augustine, 'Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts can find no rest till they find their home in Thee.' But men in their search after God have travelled along very different paths, and have taken up very dissimilar attitudes to human life. Paul's life is singular in this, that within its compass we see exhibited two distinct and contrasted ways of seeking God. Mystic asceticism had no attractions for him. In spite of the fact that he considered this present age as inherently evil, and was inclined to be pessimistic in his view of man's nature, he had no interest in those types of religious search which take up an antagonistic or negative attitude to human life and to the world it is manifested in. Moreover, his soul could not find permanent satisfaction in any system of religion which regarded God as purely transcendent and ordinarily unattainable. But in his younger days he had made full trial of the way of Pharisaic Judaism. He 'profited in the Jews' religion' above many of his compeers.[1] The path of Judaism was the path of the Law. In it God was regarded as supremely a holy Law-giver, a just Judge, who loved righteousness and rewarded the righteous, but punished transgressors and shut them off from His face. It is true that there was the promise of a closer walk with God in the vision and hope of

[1] Gal. i. 14.

a coming Messiah, who would bring down God's kingdom and rule on earth. But, as we have seen, for Paul that hope failed. It proved insufficient for him that he should know God only through His will declared in Law, as in practice it proved impossible to keep that Law perfectly, and so bring down the Christ. Obedience to Law was at best irksome and fitful ; and there was that within Paul which called out for God Himself, the living God, that he should possess Him.

He, therefore, forsook the way of Law and obedience, suddenly and decisively, because there was revealed to him a better way, in which he gained God as a personal possession. He found God in Jesus Christ reconciling the world to Himself. In the religion of Jesus, Paul no longer had need to seek for God. He had found Him, and life for the Apostle was henceforth not an effort to reach a distant objective, but the enjoyment of an immediate Divine communion and mission which secured complete satisfaction for his nature.

The road that Paul travelled in this venture has often been trodden by men before, but he reached a surer goal than most. There is a type of faith which in various degrees is to be found exemplified in most of the great religions of mankind, which finds its centre in the idea of the *grace* of God. In it God is thought of as reaching out after and seeking for His human children, and the culminating experience is found in man's sharing in the Divine life, and in a resulting co-operation of effort.

Manifestly there are grave dangers to be encountered in a religious experience of this kind, and much will depend on the clearness of the conception which is formed by the devotee of his God. Uniformly

this type of religion demands a complete self-surrender on the part of man, and when God is thought of largely under human attributes, with either an imperfect morality, or as superior to moral considerations, such self-surrender inevitably leads to deplorable moral results.[1] Yet it is with this type of religion that the Christianity of Paul has affinity. We have already seen that as a Jew his natural thought of God had been that of a supreme Being, a Sovereign and Law-giver, afar off, living in the central vault of the sky, and specially interested in the children of Israel as His own peculiar people. The highest hope of the nation was the personal possession of Jehovah when he would come as the Messiah. But Paul despaired of that eventuality as the outcome of the nation's faith in the Law, and this proved the negative preparation for his sudden change of life. The change in his life was vital. Instead of a life of obedience, it meant a life of self-surrender. Instead of a life of incessant human endeavour it meant a life of receptiveness. The emphasis no longer remained on human effort and will-power, but on Divine incentive and co-operation. It was indeed, as he himself declared, a new life. He had become a new creature. God was no longer external to him ; in Jesus Christ he had found and experienced God.[2]

The person of Jesus Christ as the living Lord of his life was what made his religion efficient, and

[1] *Cf.* certain forms of Vaishnavite religion in India.

[2] *Cf.* Wrede, *Paul*, pp. 11, 12. 'The old is departed ; behold it is become new ! He knows himself freed from this whole world with its misery, its striving after naught, and the curse of its sin. A higher world has been opened to him through Christ, and it is to him as if he had already lived therein. What has his whole life been hitherto ? A bootless wrestling, a way without a goal, hard service, and unfulfilled longing. But now the way leads "from glory to glory."'

saved it from the excesses and deficiencies which have marked ethnic religion of a similar type. To Paul Jesus was at once the human Jesus who had been crucified at Calvary, and the living spirit who held the mastery of his inner life. In his knowledge of the suffering Jesus he saw concretely the supreme example of the love and grace of God, and the concreteness of this vision saved his religion from becoming either speculative or mythological, the common fate of cognate ethnic attempts to realise God in human life. And, moreover, by persistently insisting on the identity of the crucified Jesus with the risen Lord he avoided the danger of his religion developing into another religion of law and a book, giving us instead a supreme example of an enthusiastically sincere religion of the spirit. Jesus of Nazareth, whom men knew as a brother man on earth, stands in the very presence of God as Son, and shares in His nature and counsels. *In Him* Paul too stands before God, the Father, and shares in the Divine life. And with Paul, all that company who are 'in Christ' join with him in a communion of worship and in the life of an actualised kingdom of God.

Throughout his after-life as a Christian Paul was very sensitive to this reversal in his life. He frequently alludes to the change in his letters and seeks to explain it to others.

He constantly holds up his life as a mirror for others to see themselves in. For it is a commonplace with him that his conversion, except in the manner of it, was not unique but natural in Christian experience. The aim of much of his endeavour was to mediate just a similar change in the lives of others. Consequently when we enquire into the nature and meaning of the new direction and development of

the Apostle's life at this crisis the starting-point of our enquiry should be his own testimony.

There is, however, a preliminary consideration which we ought to bear in mind. It has been suggested that Paul was inclined to exaggerate when he spoke of the change in his life.

His literary method lends some colour to this charge. Much of his effectiveness as a writer, and doubtless also as a preacher, was due to his habitual use of the method of contrasts. His descriptions and definitions gain in vividness and incisiveness by his fondness for antitheses. And it is perhaps possible to detect in him through his use of this literary method an over-emphasis in his thought of the break in his life, especially when in self-justification he had to subject his own past to introspective criticism.

We have accordingly to be on our guard not to overlook the many traits which persisted from his old life into the new. We have to be equally alert to recognise elements of continuity, and the new points of departure in his life. For this reason his testimony is to be interpreted with a constant reference to his original mental equipment and general outlook on life. We shall fail to understand Paul and his religion if we attempt to place him, as is so often done, in an environment of modern cosmological ideas and modern psychology. Allusion has already been made to the limitations that his training imposed on him, and if we are to gain an understanding of the permanent influence that his conversion had on his life and thought, we must begin by rigidly imagining ourselves back into his surroundings and start from what we know to have been given him by his training and environment. In particular it is important to keep in view the contrast that was ever present to his mind

between the heavenly world and the earth, and between the life of the spirit and the life of this world. These thoughts constantly furnished him with the setting of his message, and provided him with the framework for his explanation of his religious experience.

Another matter had perhaps better be mentioned here in order to clear our minds from misapprehension. The turning-point in his life is usually spoken of as his 'conversion.' But the use of this term in this connection is not without serious drawbacks. In its modern usage the emphasis is all put on moral considerations as leading up to the life crisis. Popular religion speaks of a man being converted from a bad life or from an alien religion which is considered as bad. But in Paul's case the moral interest though very real in the issue was quite secondary in importance. He was not immediately concerned with remorse for past conduct, but with the vision of a new and expanded life of the spirit. The revelation of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God in him opened to his experience the inspiration and the resources of the heavenly kingdom. This was his ruling thought in the crisis of his life. For the moment his interest was centred, not in problems of human conduct, but in expectations and hopes regarding his relations with the unseen or upper world.

For Paul had at this time no fault to find with his moral life. We have no 'Confessions of St. Paul' to record experiences like those of St Augustine. All the evidence goes to show that he had consistently lived a clean straightforward life, which on the whole leaned towards austerity. We have his own authority for saying that as touches the righteousness which comes from the keeping of the Law he was 'blameless.'[1]

[1] Phil. iii. 6.

His life as a Pharisee had been above the average of his fellows. But what he did doubt was the efficacy of this 'righteousness' of the Law to bring about the advent of the Messiah's kingdom. His consciousness of sin and failure was not so much personal as national.

Thus Paul's conversion was not preceded by the experience known in modern 'revivals' as 'conviction of sin,' or the tortures of an awakened conscience. On the road to Damascus it was not the problem of personal sin, but a vision of God realised in human experience through union with the risen Jesus which brought him to the feet of Jesus in self-surrender and adoration, and for ever cancelled for him the life of bondage under the Law.

How then did Paul describe the great change in his life? The series of contrasts in which he pictured it is very striking. In the letter to the Galatians the old life characteristic of Pharisaism which consisted in striving to attain righteousness by the deeds of the Law is sharply contrasted with the new life of faith in Christ Jesus. The change in his life was a change from a life of ineffective *human* effort to please God to a life of simple *receptiveness* of the grace and power of God for the perfection of human life through the surrender of the human will to God in Christ.

The thoroughness of this change is emphasised in another set of contrasts, in which Paul declares that he had *died* to the old life of struggle, and *risen again* to a new life of the spirit through union with Christ in His resurrection. 'For I,' he says, 'though under law, died to law, that I might live unto God. With Christ I am crucified, and I live—no longer I—but Christ lives in me. And as for the fact that I still live in the flesh I live in faith, which faith is

in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.'[1] The antitheses in this passage are remarkable. Life 'under Law' is contrasted with 'life unto God'; death by crucifixion with Christ to life in union with Christ; the old self or ego as the controlling power in his life with a new principle of control—Christ living in him; and the 'life of the flesh' with 'life in faith.' In his letter to the Romans, Paul develops at length this thought of *death* to an old type of life leading to a *new* life of the spirit through a mystical union with Jesus Christ. 'Are ye ignorant,' he asks, 'that we all who were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death? We were buried, therefore, through that baptism unto His death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in a new quality of life.'[2]

He uses still another set of contrasts in describing the effect of his conversion. He says that the characteristic mark of the old life is *bondage*, variously described as bondage to law, to sin, to the entanglements of the lower life of 'this world,' and to 'the lusts of the flesh.' On the contrary, the mark of the new life of faith in Jesus Christ is *freedom*. This freedom is defined as emancipation from the tyranny of the Law, redemption from the power of sin and from death, and victory over the bondage of the flesh and evil spirits.[3]

We shall mention only one other set of contrasts by which the Apostle seeks to illustrate the nature of the change in his life. The old life is the life of the *flesh*, and the new life is the life of the *Spirit*. The

[1] Gal. ii. 19–20.
[2] Rom. vi. 4, and chap. vi., *passim*.
[3] *Cf.* Rom. vi. 18; Gal. ii. 4, vi.; Rom. viii. 2–15.

former is the life characteristic of this world, the latter pertains to the upper or heavenly world. This contrast is fully developed in his letter to the Romans,[1] especially in the following passage. 'You are all no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit if the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if a man has not the Spirit of Christ he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is within you, the *body* indeed is dead as a consequence of sin, but the *spirit* is full of life as a consequence of righteousness. *And if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead* dwelleth in you, He who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will give life even to your mortal bodies for the sake of His Spirit dwelling in you.'[2]

It is evident from these series of contrasts that in Paul's view the change in his life was no mere surface change in thought or outward activity. It was a radical change which reached the very springs of his being. Using the terms of modern psychology we can see that the whole psychical man was affected, his intellect, his emotions, and his will. A flood of new feeling was released in his life, his mental outlook was modified and transformed, and he entered on a new course of activity which was at once novel and stupendous in its range. Paul had, however, a psychology of his own which we must try to grasp and understand. According to him the root of the matter reached deeper than the emotions, intellect, and will. The new life had its origin in the innermost depths of his being, deep down in the *spirit* which lies behind all a man's feeling, thinking, and activity. It is not always easy to appreciate the Apostle's thought here, but he seems to hold that rooted in every man is a God-given Spirit whose affinities are with the

[1] *Cf.* Rom. viii. [2] *Cf.* Rom. viii. 9–11.

heavenly world, and which is by nature at war with the lusts of the flesh.

This Spirit is the medium of contact with the higher life of the upper or spiritual world. But if a man chooses to live the life of this lower world, neglecting the things of the spirit, the Spirit within him becomes dormant or even atrophied. In Paul's opinion it becomes subject to death. The unforgiveable sin is the sin against the Holy Ghost. The place of the Spirit is usurped by another self, which is born of earth and is nourished by a self-seeking life, finding its interest and nature in the things of this world. But this self is at best evanescent. It has not within it the seeds of eternal life. It dies with the body. It was Paul's thought that at his conversion this Ego, the 'I' in him, was transformed. That Self which had grown up in his struggle to keep the Law, which took pride in achievement, and claimed reward, but which so often suffered defeat through its inherent weakness, *died*, being as it were crucified with Christ, and no longer regulated the life of Paul. In its stead a new Spirit ruled in his life, a Spirit which he identified equally with the innermost principle of his own life and with the Spirit of Jesus or of God dwelling within him. That is to say, his own inner person, the 'I' in him, had become one with the Spirit of Jesus Christ who had become revealed in him. This Divine Spirit finds its dwelling-place in this way with the spirit of men, and brings down the heavenly life into human experience. No longer did Paul feel as a mere man, think as a mere man, or act as a mere man. The Love of God, the Mind of God, and the Will of God, made explicit through the indwelling person of Jesus Christ, became supreme in his life. The immediate consequence

was a sense of victory, of freedom, and detachment from the world and sin. Henceforth he participated in the life of the upper or eternal world, he was a citizen of heaven. He still remained in the body it is true, but his true life was 'hid with Christ in God.' In this way the old antinomy of the earthly life and the heavenly life, of the fleshly self and the Spirit of man, is resolved; and Paul, though still in the flesh, is enabled to live the holy life of the heavenly world. But he never thus regarded his life as perfect. He was still subject to growth and development in the new life. The possibilities of the life of the Spirit ever revealed themselves afresh before him. 'One thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forward to the things that are before, I press on to the goal, unto the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.' [1]

This intimate religious yet personal experience which the Apostle had of Jesus Christ could not but give him a new vision of God and of man. Paul had reached God in Jesus, and had gained Him for a possession. But it was not the God of the Pharisee that so manifested Himself to him, and the new element that he discovered in the Divine nature he expressed by the term 'grace.' By this he means the wonderful love and condescension of the Eternal God in stooping down as it were from the heavenly regions to earth and calling men in Jesus Christ to a new experience of Himself. Nothing in heaven or in earth could separate him from this love of God in Christ, and in his heart there was born a wonderful answering love to God, which expressed at once gratitude, obedience, and entire self-surrender. Along this road Paul reached that rich experience of God

[1] Phil. iii. 14.

which his Master, Jesus, first exemplified and made possible for men in an experience of faith that finds appropriate expression in the prayer 'Our Father.'[1]

Paul's thought of man also changed in conformity with this new thought of God. As a Pharisee he had held the Law to be the full expression of the will of God, and obedience to the Law as man's unavoidable duty. The whole of the nation's future depended on such obedience, and salvation was national. But now he realised from his experience of Christ that the salvation of man depends ultimately not on human effort but on the wonderful 'grace' of God in Jesus Christ. As the Apostle John put it: 'We love Him, because He first loved us.'

It was this sense of the love and goodness of God to himself that led him to adopt a new attitude in his relations to men. In modern phrase his experience of the Fatherhood of God led him to the practical truth of the brotherhood of man. 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, ye are all one in Christ Jesus.' It was because of this feeling that the Apostle became 'all things to all men, if by any means he might save some.' The grace of God that was shed abroad in his own heart released a flood of feeling in him towards others that was evidenced equally in his marvellous missionary labours, and in outspoken defence of the universality and spirituality of the Christian life. The same influence led him to abandon the purely national conception of human salvation and to emphasise the responsibility and worth of the individual. The grace of God is manifested, not to any one favoured nation, but to every man 'in Christ Jesus.' In this fundamental thought Paul was in the

[1] *Cf.* Rom. viii. 15.

true succession of Jesus. For Paul on the memorable day of Damascus, looking up with sightless eyes and crying 'What shall I do, Lord?' was but expressing a religious *faith* identical with that of Jesus when He looked up into heaven and cried 'Father,' and with that of every Christian ever since in whom Jesus Christ has been genuinely revealed.

And not the smallest of Paul's achievements lies in this, that in this way he secured for the many that living experience of God which characterised the life of Jesus, and he accomplished this 'by anchoring these many souls in the Soul of the One.'[1] A new brotherhood of man 'in Christ' has resulted.

[1] Deissmann, *St. Paul*, p. 232.

Chapter III: The Apostle

THE age of Paul was a missionary age, and in the eyes of the large world he was but one of the many itinerant religious propagandists who were active in his day. The great pagan deities of the East had many votaries who, travelling westward, introduced their mystic systems and idolatrous worship throughout Greece and even as far as Rome. And equally the imperial cult of Rome and the worship of the more philosophic and æsthetic religions of Greece were being enthusiastically transplanted into Asia Minor and the adjacent countries. Orthodox Pharisaism itself was strongly propagandist,[1] Paul previous to his conversion being a type of its energetic emissaries.

The inhabitants of these countries were, therefore, quite accustomed to visits from wandering preachers; and we can quite understand that then, as now, the majority of men regarded these with indifference or scorn, or at best with an idle curiosity.[2]

We are not therefore to think of Paul, the missionary, as attracting great attention in the cities he visited. To most he was but an obscure Jew, an eccentric religious enthusiast, or 'a setter forth of strange gods.'[3] Once or twice indeed his powerful personality influenced even eminent personages;[4] and on several occasions he became the talk of a town.[5] But speaking generally, 'the leading men of the time, especially the literary leaders, took no notice of the wanderer; and if he does, as at Athens, come into contact with the philosophers, they either put him off with phrases of the worldlywise or they

[1] Matt. xxiii. 15.
[2] *Cf.* Deissmann, *St. Paul*, p. 199.
[3] Acts xvii. 18.
[4] Acts xiii. 4–12.
[5] *E.g.* Acts xix. 23–41.

abuse him, and regard him as a ridiculous personage : "What would this seed-pecker say?"'[1] All this is extremely instructive. To-day the memory of those men who passed Paul by and failed to appreciate the greatness of his message is forgotten ; while Paul, the obscure Jewish missionary, is recognised as one of earth's great men, a man whose message has changed the history of the whole world. 'God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong.'[2]

We know comparatively little about the details of Paul's missionary career. His biography, could it be written, would be one of the most interesting and instructive of books. But our material is all too scanty. We have only a few vividly coloured pictures in the Book of Acts, at the best giving us episodical glimpses of a life of energetic movement and volcanic force. Behind all this history of his adventures, achievement, and suffering there lay the still greater history of a great soul, a saint, and a hero in the making. In this realm any description is at the best only suggestive. What a world of soul-striving human experience, for instance, there must have been behind these two sentences culled from one of his letters :

'Necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel.'

'I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.'

On another occasion he writes with deep feeling when, racked with anxiety concerning the welfare of his friends at Thessalonica, whence he had been driven forth by persecution a few weeks earlier, he sent forth Timothy to 'establish' them and 'comfort' them concerning their faith. 'When we could no longer

[1] Deissmann, *St. Paul*, i. 197. [2] 1 Cor. i. 27.

bear it, we preferred to be left behind at Athens *alone*.'[1] It is in the sympathetic realisation of the meaning of such passages as these that we get a glimpse of the real Paul, the Apostle and bond-servant of Jesus Christ. His power rested, not so much in the truthfulness of his message, as in its embodiment in the man himself. He drew and gripped men by 'cords of a man and bands of love,' just in the same way as he himself had been drawn and gripped by the love of Jesus Christ.

One aspect of the uniqueness of Paul, the missionary, is the astonishing extent of his travel. In the course of his work he visited practically all the considerable provinces and cities of culture and commerce ranging from Jerusalem to Rome. 'Tarsus, Jerusalem, Damascus, Antioch, Cyprus, Iconium, Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Illyricum, Rome, perhaps also Crete and Spain—the sower who ploughed the furrows and scattered the seed over this wide area deserves to have it said of him that his field was the world.'[2]

In this respect his achievement is without parallel. It is to be remarked, however, that he almost exclusively confined his attention to large cities. He did not evangelise the rural population of the provinces. He did not, like the modern missionary, learn the vernacular languages of the countries he passed through; but spoke in Greek, which was the *lingua franca* of the day. He therefore made his appeal to a comparatively limited, but as regards enlightenment to an advanced, circle in each civic community. As his experience grew, his method took a more conscious form and matured. His plan seems to have been to

[1] 1 Thess. iii. 1.
[2] Deissmann, *St. Paul*, p. 200.

establish and build up little Christian communities in each of the various large cities, from which as centres the faith should grow and expand spontaneously.

He kept in the closest touch with these basal communities by personal visits, through messengers, and by letters. Much of his travel was prompted by his desire to impart spiritual gifts to the churches, and to inspire their members to lives of purity and to the worship and service of Christ. It has been suggested with much probability that Paul's vision of the possibilities of the influence and extent of this network of city churches grew with his travels from a provincial to an imperial outlook.[1] The religion of Christ was to become the religion of the Roman Empire. It is remarkable how in these days of beginnings the world-wide possibilities and universal range of Christianity were realised in this very practical fashion by her first and greatest missionary. His far-seeing strategy and the wise conservation of his own energy constantly call forth our deep admiration.

Our wonder is no less stirred when we consider the conditions under which Paul journeyed and did his work. We have observed that he followed the main routes of travel between the East and the West. But travel in those days was very different from what it is in these days of the steamship and the railway. His journeys cost Paul no little labour and hardship. He made large use of the sea for getting from place to place. 'The gospel, which first was sounded on the Lake of Genesareth for fishers and boatmen, continued to love the rhythm of oars and the wind-filled sail, and where formerly the rude religion of seamen confided in the protection of Aesculapius and

[1] Ramsay, *St. Paul, the Traveller and Roman Citizen*, Chap. VI.

Serapis, or even the God of Abraham, now the youthful Christ made hearts strong amid the howling rage of the Mediterranean storm, and called for a blessing on the hard ship's bread.'[1] Paul's voyage to Rome as a prisoner and the thrilling story of his shipwreck are familiar to us.[2] But this is only one of several such adventures. Before this voyage he has told us he had already suffered shipwreck *three times*.[3] Once more amid the perils and discomforts of these many voyages to and fro in the stormy Aegean and Levantine seas we catch a glimpse of the real Paul, and pay our tribute to his hardy endurance and indomitable courage in the service of his Master.

On land he mainly travelled on foot, and again it is the same story of superhuman effort and great-heartedness. And, moreover, the hardships and perils of the road were only matched by the trials and persecutions of the cities. 'Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils of my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger, thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.'[4]

Besides these physical distresses he tells us that he also laboured under the pressure of daily anxiety for his converts in the various churches he founded. Their joy was his joy, their sufferings his sufferings. 'Besides those things which are without, there is that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

[1] Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
[2] Acts xxvii.
[3] 2 Cor. xi. 25.
[4] 2 Cor. xi. 22–27.

Who is weak and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?'[1]

There were in addition special conditions created by the nature of Paul's message and work which added to the hardship of his life. These are hinted at in the passage just quoted—'in perils of my countrymen, in perils among false brethren, in perils in the city.' In each city whither he went, the group of orthodox Jews residing there regarded him as a renegade and a destroyer of their religion and pursued him with bitter hatred and relentless persecution. On more than one occasion these men were the exciting cause of popular riots against Paul and his companions.[2]

Equally embittered and much more galling to Paul was the opposition of an influential section of *the original Christian community* in Jerusalem. The Christianity of those men was in effect *an addition* to their original Judaism, for they held that loyalty to the Law of Moses and the ordinances of Judaism must be observed equally with loyalty to Christ. There is nothing in history to show that these opponents of his in their religion were not strong, earnest, and conscientious men. They had the practice of Jesus Himself and other Apostles to appeal to in support of their conception of Christianity. When, however, through the work of Barnabas and Paul at Antioch there was a large accession of Gentiles into the Church, and Paul began to teach that it was not necessary for these to observe the Law as the Palestinian Christians did, a position of acute difficulty arose. The question was referred to a council of the Apostles, and Paul was granted liberty by the leaders at Jerusalem to teach and organise the Gentile Church in his own way

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 28–29. [2] Acts xiv. 2.

with certain reservations.[1] But this Judaeo-Christian party, not persuaded, organised a systematic mission to follow in the wake of Paul, and to counteract his influence in the Gentile Churches, by teaching that the only entrance to Christianity was through the door of Judaism. This mission caused no little confusion and division in the Churches organised by Paul, and one can easily understand and sympathise with the natural indignation and anger of the Apostle.

He did not spare the intruders, but roundly denounced them in letters as 'false brethren,' and 'dogs and evil workers.'[2] As a matter of fact, Paul saw clearly that a vital principle of Christianity was at stake, and his anxious care for the true welfare and peace of mind of his converts led him to write several letters burning at once with indignation and reproachful love; and to visit them again and again lest all his work should become of none effect.

He travelled in the most simple fashion. His wants were few, and were always supplied by the work of his own hands. A few rolls of manuscripts—his Bible—a few green olives and a loaf of bread for food, and his cloak to cover him, these probably formed the bulk of his baggage on his foot journeys. He had no family ties to bind him, having renounced marriage for the work's sake. From a similar motive he also renounced his right to be supported by his churches, and uniformly refused anything in the shape of salary or gifts, except from his most intimate friends. For Paul found that his handicraft was itself a very valuable aid to his work. It brought him near to the people, and proved a channel through which he made some most valuable friendships.[3]

He also made use of the Jewish synagogues as a

[1] Acts xv. 19–20. [2] Phil. iii. 2. [3] Acts xviii. 3.

means of introduction to the people. Here on the Sabbath days he would meet not only orthodox Jews to whom his rabbinical training would recommend him, but also many of the more enlightened Gentiles who had been attracted to the Jewish place of worship because of its pure theistic teaching and lofty moral instruction. Here, too, Paul could appeal with confidence to the Septuagint edition of the Old Testament, and utilise all its more liberal teaching regarding God and moral duty as an introduction to his gospel. Sooner or later, as his message developed, he inevitably encountered opposition from the orthodox, and was frequently driven out of the synagogues, but not before his message had taken root in the hearts of a few, who thenceforward attached themselves to him, and became the nucleus of a church.

We know that he also preached in the open streets, in the market-places,[1] in schools,[2] and by the riverside,[3] but doubtless much of his most effective work was done in quiet earnest talks with small groups of interested men at his lodging or the place of his work. Even when in prison he found opportunity to preach Christ.[4]

The success of his gospel was also secured by his power of winning the confidence and friendship of men, and inspiring them to Christian service.[5] A large and enthusiastic band of men and women associated themselves with him, all devoted to him in loyal attachment, and all zealous in the service of Christ in the churches. A study of Paul's friendships would be most instructive for any who aspire to leadership. For every true leader reduplicates his power and influence by each true associate friend he makes; and in this fact lies no small portion of the secret

[1] Acts xvii. 17. [2] Acts xvi. 13. [3] Philemon 10.
[4] Phil. i. 13. [5] Acts xix. 9.

of Paul's mighty influence on his generation. The following quotation from Deissmann's 'St. Paul,' explanatory of Paul's relation to his friends, is therefore worthy of our close attention : 'His first companion, Barnabas, was at least his equal in authority, but the later associates are decidedly subordinate to him. They shared in the work as fellow-travellers (St. Paul says pleasantly 'companions abroad'[1]), letter-writers,[2] letter-carriers,[3] personal representatives,[4] and of course as evangelists and teachers.[5] In delicate situations he was able to rely on them ; the apostasy of John, who was called Mark, in Pamphylia,[6] or that of Demas, who once evidently, against the wishes of the Apostle, went to Thessalonica,[7] was no doubt a rare exception. What an attractive personality is that of Titus, for instance, whose tact and firmness in a time of passionately strained relations restored order in the Corinthian Church after it had been stirred up by agitators.[8]

'St. Paul is fond of applying expressive titles full of personal feeling to these helpers—Timothy, Tychicus, Titus, Silvanus, Aquila and Priscilla, Urbanus, Epaphroditus, Euodia, Syntyche, Clement, Philemon, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke the physician, and the rest. He calls them familiarly "fellow-workers,"[9] a name borrowed from the workshop ; in a spirit of comradeship the champion of Christ addresses them as "fellow-soldiers,"[10] or still more vigorously, "yoke-fellows"[11]—with a playful reference perhaps to the ox treading out the corn, which he inter-

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 19. [2] Rom. xvi. 22.
[3] 2 Cor. vii. 6–9. [4] 1 Cor. xvi. 10–11 ; 2 Cor. viii. 23.
[5] 2 Cor. i. 19 ; Col. i. 7. [6] Acts xiii. 13 ; xv. 37 ff.
[7] 2 Tim. iv. 10. [8] *Cf.* 2 Cor. ii., vii., viii.
[9] 1 Cor. iii. 9 ; 2 Cor. viii. 23 ; Rom. xvi. 3, 9, 21 ; Phil. ii. 25 ; iv. 3 ; Philem. 1, 24.
[10] Phil. ii. 25 ; Philem. 2. [11] Phil. iv. 3.

preted to mean the apostles.[1] As they all looked up to one Master in common, his assistants are his "fellow-slaves"; [2] but because they are in the service of that Master they are to the churches the reflected "glory of Christ."[3] Recollection of sufferings shared in common in prison makes him win for Aristarchus and Epaphras, Andronicus and Junias the honourable title of "fellow-prisoner." Phoebe, a Christian woman of Cenchreæ, the port of Corinth, who had done much for his welfare, is singled out for distinction as his "patroness,"[4] and the mother of his friend, Rufus, is even called "mother,"[5] that being the plain, hearty way of showing his respect.

'What a vast deal is hidden behind these brief names! How many experiences, how much endurance, how much brotherhood! The strength, more particularly of the emotional nature, which speaks in these names was one of the magic charms wielded by St. Paul, the leader of men. His influence on the common people depended not least on his ability to arouse the slumbering psychic forces even of the most simple by the hearty directness of his appeal as man to man.'[6]

Once more in these friendships, and the loyal co-operation in work for Christ to which they led, we get a glimpse of the real Paul, and are introduced to another secret of his power over men, and of his achievement. For he did not only achieve much himself, but also inspired others to a like achievement.

It is sufficiently evident that Paul's success as a missionary lay, not among the official and literary classes, but mainly among the middle and lower classes. He mentions slaves and freedmen frequently in his

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 9 f.; 1 Tim. v. 18. [2] Col. i. 7; iv. 7.
[3] 2 Cor. viii. 23. [4] Rom. xvi. 2.
[5] Rom. xvi. 13. [6] Deissmann, *St. Paul*, pp. 212–214.

letters, and even gives special attention to the problem of their relations to their masters.

The poverty of the churches is also clearly indicated, and was used by the Apostle[1] as an occasion for eliciting the liberality of the better-off. One most practical lesson in Christian brotherhood was founded on the need of the churches in Judea, which led to a general collection being made for their necessities in some of the Pauline churches. Only here and there in the records do we find the name of a rich or highly cultured man.

While thus noting the poverty and comparatively low social status of the converts, however, we are not to think of them as belonging to the proletariat, or as without education and a certain capability of self-government. Paul's work was not a mission to the depressed classes, nor was it directed to the salving of the shipwrecked derelicts of society. In the organisation of his churches he was much aided by the democratic instincts of the day. Men of that day were used to the ideas of mutual control and government. His letters were written to literate men who possessed some culture. He was thus able to permit to his converts in their communal life a much larger liberty and power of initiative than modern missionaries are accustomed to do with converts in more illiterate countries. Paul had a great asset in his work in the common basis that Greek culture had created alike for the conduct of life and thought, and for communal organisation. He did not therefore find it necessary to make long stays with his converts. On one occasion he stayed a year and a half at Corinth, and on another occasion he stayed two years at Ephesus. All his other visits to his churches were confined to a few months or

[1] But *cf.* Acts xix. 12.

even days. Nor did he find it necessary to impose any uniform fixed method of government in the churches, even though these varied largely in different places in strength and powers of self-expression. In some places a small group of men and women met in a private home for worship, and the church organisation was of the simplest nature. In other places there was a large community with fixed officers and rules of conduct. Spontaneity and large freedom *in the Spirit* was allowed to all; but Paul either in person or through his friends secured by frequent visits and still more frequent letters a certain uniformity in the life and conduct and n the aspirations and thought life of the whole Christian community. Baptism on entrance, the common weekly assembling of the saints, a simple confession of the faith, and the institution of the Lord's Supper were the primary and universal practice of the faithful, out of which in later days, as necessity demanded, the more complex system of church organisation and ecclesiastical government grew. It is a mistake to attribute to Paul great originality and initiative in this matter of organisation. His central principle seems to have been a liberal amount of freedom, and such appointments for rule and order as he found necessary were adaptations from the practice of the synagogue and similar institutions of his day.

The manner and the substance of Paul's preaching are unknown to us. Tradition speaks of the Apostle as of low stature and ungainly form. His enemies could say of him, 'his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.' We recall his own references to that mysterious bodily ailment, which he calls 'a thorn in the flesh,' and 'the messenger of Satan to buffet me.' We conclude that Paul's power cannot be explained in terms of a magnetic gift or oratory or a commanding

presence.[1] It was the man himself and his message. The subject of that message was Christ: 'I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'[2] The risen and glorified Christ, to whom the Christian is united in a mystical bond of union, is identified with the man Jesus, who suffered on the cross at Calvary. Combined with this was the thought of the early return of Christ and the consummation of His kingdom.

On this great theme Paul could speak very simply and directly out of his own experience as occasion required. 'I spoke unto you as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat, for you were not able to bear it.'[3] But he could also on occasion speak 'wisdom to the wise,' opening up to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. The skill of Paul is manifested in nothing more than in this power of adapting his attitude and his teaching to the needs and capabilities of his hearers. One result was that it was impossible to be indifferent to him. Every man who came into close contact with him either loved him or hated him—a mark, as we have seen, of all great men.

The details of the greater part of Paul's missionary activity are hidden from us. The Book of Acts indeed tells the story of three journeys in considerable detail; but in the concentration of attention on these known journeys there has been a tendency to overlook the importance and the extent of his other activities. For fourteen years previous to the first of these journeys he was actively engaged in missionary work, mainly in the districts of Cilicia and Syria. It is most probable that during this time his methods and outlook were subject to a marked development; but the strenuousness and passion of his service for Christ were the

[1] 1 Cor. i. 26. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 2. [3] 1 Cor. iii. 12.

same from the beginning. In these earlier years he probably found a sphere for work mainly among his fellow Jews, and among those Gentiles who had attached themselves to the Jewish synagogues of the dispersion. A wider vision came to him early in what is usually, but inaccurately, called his first journey; and turning with his message direct to the Gentiles, he began to earn in earnest his title of 'the Apostle of the Gentiles.'[1] During the progress of his (so-called) second journey he attained a still wider ideal, and saw the vision of a Christian Church coterminous with the Roman Empire.[2] It was the pursuit of this imperial idea that summoned him across to Greece; and brought Rome, and even Spain, into the purview of his purpose.[3]

After the 'day of Damascus' Paul went into Arabia, but almost immediately we find him back again in Damascus, whence, however, he was driven by persecution in the third year after his conversion. After a very brief visit of a private nature to Jerusalem (33 A.D.), he found a new sphere of work in Cilicia and Syria, the neighbourhood of his birth. Here he became a co-worker with Barnabas in the important work of organising a Gentile-Jewish Church in the considerable town of Antioch in Syria. During this time, too (35 and 36 A.D.), he seems to have paid a second visit to Jerusalem, and unofficially consulted the leaders of the Church there on the subject of the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian Church.

Fourteen years after his conversion, from Antioch as base he made the tour by sea and land which is familiar to us under the title 'the first missionary journey.' He passed through the island of Cyprus

[1] *Cf.* Acts xiii. [2] Acts xvi.
[3] Ramsay develops this thought in several of his works.

and across to the mainland to Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia. From this tour (47 A.D.) he returned to Antioch full of enthusiasm and hope because of the success of the Gospel among the Gentiles.

This success among the Gentiles, however, seriously disturbed the prejudices of the Mother Church at Jerusalem, and from this time a propaganda was started by a Judaising party there with a view to subverting Paul's free offer of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

This occasioned a third visit on the part of Paul to Jerusalem (49 A.D.), during which, with Barnabas, he met the leaders of the Church in council and came to an understanding with them on the basis of which he was left free to pursue his work among the Gentiles. From this time, however, a party of irreconcilables at Jerusalem worked against him, sending emissaries after him to the churches he established to combat his teaching. This counter-mission added much to the anxiety and hardship of Paul's life, and almost embittered him towards those whom he could but regard as enemies of the Gospel of Christ.

After his return to Antioch, Paul with Silas as companion set out on an important journey through the Cilician Gates to Lycaonia, Phrygia, and Galatia. Impelled by a vision he crossed into Europe, and in Macedonia founded churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Beroea (50 A.D.). Failing to make an impression at Athens, he passed on to Corinth, where he founded a Church of more than ordinary importance. Here he stayed six months; after which he returned to Jerusalem by the sea route, touching at Ephesus on the way, and finally reached his base at Antioch, where he remained for a short time.

The next three years were occupied by a tour through the Cilician Gates to Galatia and Phrygia,

where he 'strengthened' the churches. Thence he passed on to Ephesus (53 A.D.), which then became the centre of a prolonged and important work. Little is known of the details of this work, but it is quite evident from hints in his letters, several of which were written from Ephesus, that Paul there passed through great suffering for the cause of Christ, and in all probability spent part of his time in prison.

After he left Ephesus (56 A.D.) he paid a short visit once more to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, going as far as Illyricum. He next formed the purpose of taking the funds collected in the churches for the poor at Jerusalem to that place, and after that to start for Rome and Spain. He accordingly travelled by land and sea to Jerusalem, visiting Macedonia and Asia Minor on the way and saying farewell.

At Jerusalem he was arrested at the instigation of the Jews, and after some delay was sent by the Roman authorities to Rome to await trial at the Imperial Court (60 A.D.). Two years passed there in confinement, not idle years, however, for the Gospel could not be bound. After this the fate of Paul is hidden in darkness. Two views are held: the first that he suffered martyrdom at the end of these two years' imprisonment (62 A.D.); the other that he was released from prison, and travelled still further west to Spain before he was again arrested, tried, and put to death by Roman power.

These things are uncertain. One thing is sure. To the end he preached Christ, even in bonds, and having fought a good fight, and finished his course, even in martyrdom he kept the faith of his Master, Jesus Christ.[1]

[1] The chronology adopted above in the main is that of Ramsay.

Chapter IV: Paul as a Thinker

THE thought of Paul is to be interpreted in close connection with his upbringing, his personal experience of religion, and with his apostolic activity. It was in the first place conditioned by his mental outfit, and that outfit in the main was the outfit of an educated Jew of his day with liberal tendencies. We in the twentieth century may often find his thought-processes difficult and his references obscure, but not so his companions. They shared with him many of the predilections and the ambitions of his time, and for the most part looked out on the world with his eyes. He usually spoke and wrote from the standpoint of a learned Pharisee, though probably he also made rare excursions in an experimental way into Pagan modes of thought.[1] As a Christian he had a definite message to deliver, but when he wished to find forms to clothe his new ideas in, he found these ready to hand in the literature of the Old Testament, in the Apocalyptic literature of the Jews; in the resultant mental habits of his Rabbinical training; through the liberalising tendency of his touch with Hellenistic Judaism and primitive Christianity; or through his familiarity with the social and religious life of the Greek and Roman colonies.

In the second place Paul's thought was conditioned by the minds of his audience. Those to whom he wrote and spoke were often strangers to one another and to him in manner of thought and custom. It

[1] For a study of Paul's relation to Pagan mystical thought see Gardner, *Religious Experience of St. Paul*, Chap. IV., and Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*.

was a principle of his method to adapt himself as far as he could to the mental level and condition of those whom he wished to influence. In his company were to be found orthodox Palestinian Jews, liberalising Hellenistic Jews, Jewish proselytes from Paganism, Jewish Christians, and religiously minded earnest seekers after God from among the Pagans of Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome. Some of these were men of culture and education, but the large majority belonged to the semi-educated working classes. Not a few were slaves, which does not mean, however, that they were illiterate. To each man in this very varied company Paul delivered his message in terms that he could understand and appreciate. Our modern minds, with their utterly different religious and scientific background, cannot always readily catch the finer points of his thinking and his allusions, though these must have been perfectly obvious to his immediate hearers. For example, the language and feeling connected with Jewish and Pagan ideas of sacrifice and prophecy, and with Pagan mystery religion, the imagery of the Greek games and Roman militarism, and the whole setting of the social and religious life of Paul's day are so strange to our minds that in these days we must needs think ourselves back into these things if we are to appreciate the true meaning and appositeness of much of the Apostle's illustrative thinking.

Reference has already been made to the fact that it is a mistake to regard Paul as primarily a great teacher, with a rounded message, logically thought out and systematised. He imparted, not knowledge, but a new life—the life of the spirit realised through union with Jesus Christ. His thought was directed to the interpretation of this inner experience of Christ in its various aspects and relations to everyday life and

problems. It was therefore not discursive in form, but contemplative and practical. His starting point and central interest was uniformly the contemplation of the living Christ as the motive force in his own life and the lives of others.

From this centre his thought radiated out in many directions according to the needs of the moment, and these lines of thought often had no formal relation to one another except their common starting point. The impulse to thought was given to him in his original endowment of missionary spirit, which he had formerly as a militant Pharisee, but which was transformed and intensified through his contact with Christ. His passionate desire was to build up the lives of others in the same faith and experience of Jesus Christ which he himself enjoyed. The direction and form of his thought, as we have seen, were usually determined by his training and his mental environment. Its lines therefore did not run concurrently. In thought of this type we cannot expect either perfect self-consistency or a logically complete system. Those who find fault with Paul because they have been able to detect inconsistencies and inadequacy in his mental processes are themselves lacking in a sympathetic understanding of the wisdom of his method and its sufficiency to meet the problems with which he was faced. He could fairly claim that his type of thinking was perfectly adapted to his purpose and his needs. He could hardly have been expected to anticipate the demands and strictures that obtain in the literature of modern days.

What was Paul's missionary message? His letters all presuppose a very considerable amount of previous instruction. What was the Gospel according to Paul? Can we reconstruct it from his extant writings and from what we know of the man?

It is quite evident that Paul had a direct Gospel or message for every man he met. This message was simple, but very revolutionary in its effects on men's minds. The religious problem of the day, especially to the Jew, was, 'how can I be right with God?' Men did not doubt the existence of God, or God's providential interest in the world. But in general they believed that God had withdrawn Himself far from the experience of mankind, and the immediate interest of men was in the gods and demons of the middle world which existed between heaven and earth. Religion was, in fact, proving a failure. The old Pagan religions were breaking down; and a gloomy pessimism, which invaded even the more spiritual religion of the Jews, was the result. But Paul had a clear, simple, and amazingly bold answer to this religious question of his age. It has been paraphrased as follows: 'You cannot, in the first place, get right with God by trying to be good or by trying to do the Divine will. In that respect you will always fail. Your need of God is, however, immediate. You want Him now. He is your life, and apart from Him you cannot live. You cannot realise your true self; you cannot hope even to begin to be true to the Divine requirements until you are in union with God. To strive, therefore, to do the Divine will, that you may be at one with God, is of all enterprises the most hopeless. You must be at one with God that you may do the Divine will. All that is required as the initial step in the higher life of the soul is that you should unreservedly commit yourselves to God, that He may possess you and dwell in you. "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law."'[1]

[1] Swayne, *St. Paul and his Gospel*, p. 26.

So far there is nothing quite original in this message. A similar gospel has long been preached by the adherents of some forms of *Bhakti* worship in India. It was, however, a novel gospel to Paul's hearers, and when he proceeds to develop his message in a practical way he becomes startlingly original. How are men to commit themselves to God? 'All things,' he says, 'are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself *through Jesus Christ*, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation to wit:

God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ,
Not reckoning their trespasses to them;
And hath placed in our hands
The word of reconciliation.

We are ambassadors therefore, on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God.'[1] This message is again summarised in his letter to the Romans, but more in the language of Jewish technical religion. The following is a paraphrase of this passage:

'But now apart from the Law and the prophets a righteousness of God has been revealed, even a righteousness of God *through faith in Jesus Christ* unto all that believe. For there is no difference:

All men have sinned
And come short of the glory of God.
Freely, by His grace alone, are men counted righteous,
Through the liberation that is in Christ Jesus,
Whom God has set forth, as a power that propitiates,
(Through that faith in His blood)
To declare His righteousness,
Owing to the passing by, in the forbearance of God,
Of these sins already committed.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 18–20.

Yea, in order to His own righteousness in this Gospe
Age, that He Himself might be righteous and count a
righteous the man *of faith in Christ*.'[1]

Here we are back at Paul's starting-point again
The emphasis on 'faith' is emphatic. Whoeve
commits his life to Jesus Christ commits it to God
And this self-committal is something very simple bu
very definite. The life and character and the natur
of the death of Jesus were known to all. His resur
rection was an attested fact. His power as a living
Spirit in the lives of men was something subject t
experimental proof. Paul's own life experience itsel
was powerful proof of the reality of his gospel. H
had become a 'new creature.' In this lay the source
and the strength of his message.

The nature of this self-committal to Christ i
extremely practical. Its purpose is not so much t
know about God, as to co-operate in the doing o
His will by sharing His life. The intellectual elemen
is there, but it is secondary in importance. The God
to whom a man commits himself must be a God wh
attracts men, who is worthy of his trust and submission
Jesus Christ called God 'Father.' He was to Him
pre-eminently a God of grace and love. 'God wa
in Christ.' Whoever committed his life to Jesu
Christ committed himself to God, who loves me
with a gracious love. The fruit of such self-committa
was a Divine experience. Men found the Spirit o
Christ energising within them, securing to them
union with God of the most practical nature. A new
moral life was the result. Freed from the fetters o
the Law, men found a new joy in reproducing i
themselves a moral likeness to their Master. Th
boldness, definiteness, and extremely practical natur
of this message secured for Paul the success of hi

[1] Rom. iii. 21–25.

mission. He himself 'in Christ' was a living epistle of the truth of what he preached. Men recognised that he who persecuted them in times past now preached the faith which once he destroyed and could give glory to *God in him*.[1] Paul could claim that here was God, and a new life lived in God.

The central interest of this message was undoubtedly Jesus Christ. But the Apostle's thought of Christ was mainly the contemplation of the spiritual living Christ. In this contemplation we can detect two main lines of thought.[2]

Along one line Christ was regarded as the eternal Son of God who, after a time of humiliation on the earth, had been highly exalted, and now dwells in glory with the Father in heaven, at the right hand of God, destined soon again to appear on earth as the Judge of men. This line of thought has obvious kinship to Paul's youthful cosmological ideas, and to the Messianic hopes of the Jews of his day. Consequently it appealed with far greater force to his immediate hearers than it has done to men of succeeding ages.

Along the second line of thought Paul found in his characteristic mystical experience of Christ the groundwork for his interpretation of Him as the Universal

[1] Gal. i. 23–24.

[2] *Cf.* Gardner, *The Religious Experience of St. Paul*, p. 200. 'The fact is that Paul does not distinguish two different doctrines, the doctrine of the exalted Christ, and the doctrine of the mystic Christ. The first is of Jewish origin, and arose in close connection with the apocalyptic belief in the second coming, and the end of the world. Jesus Christ was seated at the right hand of God until He should return. Meantime chosen followers were allowed glimpses of His glory, and received from Him messages for the Church. The second is derived from, or at least parallel to, the beliefs of the Hellenic Mysteries. The mystic Christ is the Christ whose Spirit works in the world, and whose life is shared and carried on in the Church by every believer. These two doctrines, so different in origin and character, were fused together by the fire of the Apostle's enthusiasm.'

Divine Spirit, not afar off in heaven, but a real presence among men, energising in their inner life. Christ and the Spirit are again and again spoken of in identical terms, and there is one phrase distinctive of the Apostle's writings which is pregnant with meaning in this connection. The fundamental Christian experience is equally spoken of by him as a living 'in Christ' or 'in the Spirit' without any distinction in meaning that can be detected.

Paul nowhere seems to have felt the necessity of defining clearly his conception of this spiritual Christ. He is constantly referred to in terms that imply personality. He is not flesh, earthy or material. He is divine, holy, heavenly, living, and life-imparting. The Spirit indeed has a body, but it is a 'heavenly body' consisting seemingly in a divine light or effulgence.[1] We think irresistibly of the light which appeared at his conversion. But in spite of this indefiniteness of conception, this Spirit, Christ, who lived in Paul, was nevertheless the most certain of all realities to him, 'searching all things, even the deep things of God.' In modern days owing to our conception of spirit mainly as impersonal, as a certain tendency of mind, or as an impalpable influence on the mind, we have lost much of the vividness of Paul's vision. We are very apt in consequence to fail in appreciation of much of the directness and vitality of his message.[2]

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Paul's conception of the spiritual Christ is that it is world-wide and totally free from all elements of particu-

[1] *Cf.* 1 Cor. xv.

[2] On this subject consult Headlam, *St. Paul and Christianity*, Chap. V. This author says: 'It is not easy at first sight to know what St. Paul thought of the Spirit in its own nature. About its work he is clear. . . . But as to St. Paul's opinion about what the Spirit itself is we have great difficulty, probably because his way of looking at things was very different from our own.'

larism. To the early Jewish Christians the terms 'Son of David' and 'Messiah' were dear. Paul in the main passes these terms by, and emphasises rather the universal names, 'Son of God' and 'Lord.' Christ the Spirit is free, not bound to any country or any race or sect. 'The Spirit bloweth where it listeth.' 'St. Paul's fundamental certitude that Christ is "the Spirit" is formulated not only for all nations but for all time.'

Paul's contemplation of Christ is best studied in connection with a passage in his letter to the Philippians, which is worthy of careful attention.[1] The present glory of the Christ, 'highly exalted,' points back to an eternity of glory. The eternal Christ was concerned in the creation of the world, and in the history of mankind. For men's sake He became poor, taking on Him the likeness of men, and as a man humbled Himself to a shameful death. Thus the human life of Jesus is but an episode in the larger life of the eternal Christ. It is thought of rather as a whole, as a humiliation of the Divine One, than in detail. The human life and the shameful death on the cross were the necessary prelude to the great thought of the living spiritual Christ. It is quite evident that the Apostle was sufficiently familiar with the details of the life and teaching of Jesus. But he did not sharply distinguish between this human life of Jesus, His death, His resurrection, and the new life as spirit in the way in which these events are analytically studied in modern treatises on theology. On the contrary, in his preaching there was presented constantly the picture of the Living One who was the Crucified, or the Crucified who was alive. The whole picture of Christ forms one harmonious whole. In it the humble life of the Man was depicted as well as

[1] Phil. ii. 6-11.

the glorious new life as universal Spirit. But certain aspects of the life stand out in relief. The moral beauty and incarnate love of the human life, the element of self-sacrifice and suffering on behalf of men, the heroic endurance even unto death are as clearly indicated as the glories of the resurrection and the new life. These are all integral parts of Paul's contemplation of Christ. They answer for him the great question, who is the God to whom I am to commit myself? It was not the beauty of the gods of Greece, or the strength of the gods of Rome, or the passion of the gods of Asia Minor that drew his adherence. It was not the justice of the great Law-giver of the Pharisees that attracted him. It was the God and Father of Jesus Christ whose grace and love were so clearly exemplified in the human love of the Lord—a God of Love, of Mercy, of human sympathy, who lives in and suffers with His human children. When Paul surrendered his life to God in Jesus Christ it was thus to a God newly revealed in human history. The religion that resulted was a new religion, 'a new life,' which in practice has ever made its appeal alike to the human element as well as to the spiritual aspiration in the life of man, reconciling his heavenly desire to 'the daily task, the common round' of everyday life. And in this continuity of the thought of the human Jesus with the glorious risen Christ, Paul secured for the new religion immunity from two dangers which have ever dogged the footsteps of ethnic faiths. He emancipated it on the one hand from developing into a new mystery religion which would lose itself in vain speculation and philosophising, and on the other hand he freed the faith of Christ from becoming a new law to burden afresh the consciences of men.

Chapter V: Paul as a Thinker (*continued*)

SPECIAL attention should be paid to the use of the term 'faith' by Paul. He transformed the ordinary significance of this word into a meaning with a genuinely religious content. Much discussion has taken place in theological circles as to whether the intellectual or emotional elements in faith are primary. But Paul gets quite beyond such interests; for by 'faith' he indicated the fundamental Christian experience of intimate relationship between man and God, the state of being 'in-Christ,' and of Christ's being 'in-men.' The basal quality of this relationship permeates many of the commonest phrases in his letters. Thus by the phrases 'the faith of Christ,' 'the love of Christ,' 'the peace of Christ,' 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ,' 'the obedience of Christ,' 'the truth of Christ,' 'the righteousness of Christ,' and kindred expressions, he intends to convey far more than the ordinary genitival form of expression usually denotes. His genitive, in grammatical language, is neither subjective nor objective, but both. Christ and the human soul are both regarded as active and working in concert. Paul means 'that the particular experience or assurance of soul in the Christian takes place in the mystical and spiritual fellowship with Christ.'[1]

Radiating from this central 'faith' consciousness and depending upon it, Paul, in the contemplation of his Christian life, discovered certain special lines of experience, which he viewed as belonging to the normal Christian life. These lines of experience he used

[1] *Cf.* Deissmann, *St. Paul*, pp. 140–142.

in his practical endeavours to build up the lives of others in the faith of Christ by explaining them in terms of principles and metaphors drawn from the store-house of his own mental equipment, and from the life around him. In this way the great terms of theology, usually called Pauline (but inaccurately so, because in their modern usage they are much more developed and related to current philosophic thought than in his use of them), were first introduced into Christian thought. The right method of interpreting these is not by reading their developed doctrinal significance back into the letters of Paul, but by patiently searching out the original meaning which they conveyed to the minds of those to whom the letters were primarily sent. Our enquiry should be, what did Paul mean by such terms as 'the cross of Christ,' 'justification,' 'reconciliation,' 'forgiveness,' and 'adoption.'

The full interpretation of these and similar terms does not belong to our present study. We are content to illustrate the way in which the Apostle was able to convey to others by means of them his sense of particular Christian experiences won by him through 'faith' in Christ. What he wished in every case was a particular view of God, and a definite resulting new relation between God and man. He accomplished this by the illustrative use of these great metaphorical expressions.

In the forefront of his own consciousness were the two facts of the shameful death and the continued life of Jesus Christ. The former was a problem he had to explain, the latter an experience he had to interpret. But it was only through the light of his experience of Christ that he came to see the true meaning of the problem of the cross. He never isolated and thought of the Cross of Christ as a single entity in the movement

of Christianity, as many do with little profit in modern days. In his own life that which had once been a stumbling-block and a rock of offence now became his glory and his boasting. This is what he had to explain, and he could only do so through his present life in Christ. The key to his explanation lies in the fact that the characteristic experiences of the human Jesus were reproduced, feebly it may be, but still genuinely reproduced in his own daily experience. Christ in him was a reality. He suffered with Christ. He even speaks of being crucified with Christ.[1] He writes to the Romans to the effect that Christians are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead even so they should walk in newness of life. 'Our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should be no longer in bondage to sin.'[2]

The sufferings and death of Jesus thus had the profoundest significance for Paul. They were events not isolated from human experience. Reproduced in spirit in his own life they became charged with the most tremendous meaning for him. They became the basis of his reconciliation with God, and of a new life of freedom.

The Cross opened his eyes to many things. It was a revelation of the wickedness of men dominated by 'the prince of this world.' It supremely revealed the love and grace of God towards fallen men. It was also the highest proof of the obedience and self-consecration of Jesus. For the Cross, in the first place, is a historical event brought about by evil men. In the second place, it is a work of God, the final and complete proof of His Fatherly love and interest in men. And, in the third place, it plainly declares, in

[1] Gal. ii. 20. [2] Rom. vi. 6.

the obedience and faithfulness of Jesus, what the ideal relation of man to God should be. Further, he saw in it the principle of reconciliation and a power for righteousness in human life. His deepest thought here is that which sees in the sufferings, cross, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus 'processes of salvation, which he, Paul, and other Christians share in ethically and mystically.' Oneness with Christ includes fellowship of suffering, of purpose, of blood, of life with Christ. In a real sense the Christian, in becoming united to Christ, shares in His death, making the great choice that He did ; and shares too in the resurrection, being liberated from the power of death and of sin in a living spiritual union with the living Christ.

The language of sacrifice by which Paul frequently used to illustrate his teaching about the Cross is a dead and unknown language to many to-day, and it is thus difficult for us always to follow his exact meaning. It is a mistake, however, to regard much of this teaching as other than illustrative.

We do not propose to follow Paul in all his lines of thought on this great subject. One further remark must suffice. He found in the Cross the great proof of the reality of the reconciliation of God with man. God did not impute to men their trespasses. Expiatory sacrifice was unnecessary. 'In Christ' men were freely forgiven. 'Faith' alone was the basis for forgiveness. For God is the Father of men. He freely gave His Son for men. He Himself suffers with and for His children. The range of God the Father's own activity for men includes sacrifice and service directed towards saving them from their sins. In Christ the Father's attitude of love and self-sacrifice became incarnate and practical. Paul saw Christ, and was convinced that God's love and for-

giveness towards men were present realities, and needed not further to be won either by sacrificial ritual or the merit of obedience. Reconciliation with God, in other words, is an element in 'faith.'

That Paul illustrated this reconciliation frequently by using the language of sacrificial religion is undoubted, but it must be remembered that he was addressing men who were perfectly familiar with that language and who could interpret his metaphors as we cannot.[1]

Much more frequently, however, he used familiar relationships in the life around him to illustrate his meaning. Everybody, for example, was familiar with the processes of the law. Man is pictured as *standing as an accused person before God* awaiting judgment. He deserves condemnation, but 'in Christ' he becomes 'unaccused' and is counted as righteous. In this way the sinner becomes free 'in Christ' and the whole process is called 'justification.' Justification is thus seen to be one aspect of the life of 'faith.'

Again, man is pictured as *an enemy before God*, and his need is reconciliation. 'Faith' is the means to this reconciliation, and man finds 'peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Here is another aspect of the life of 'faith.'

Once more man is pictured as *a debtor before God*; but 'in Christ' he experiences the remission of his

[1] *Cf.* Headlam, *St. Paul and Christianity*, p. 77. 'We do not know now, and it is difficult for us to realise, all that the word "sacrifice" implied, either in popular or in any learned theology of that time. Undoubtedly it added much to the conception of what Christ's death had meant, and this idea of sacrifice was clearly in St. Paul's mind, although it is interesting to notice that it is apparently rather secondary in importance. It does not mould his thought; it occasionally suggests phraseology. He seems to use the language of sacrifice because it had been used by others, because Jesus had used it Himself.'

debt. When man enters into the relation of 'faith,' God graciously forgives the debt, and man is free to live the life of faith. Another aspect of the life of 'faith' is here seen.

Again man is pictured as a *slave before God.* 'There are various powers which St. Paul regards as the "masters" of the unfree man—sin, the Law, idols, men, death (corruption). In Christ the slave obtains freedom. This liberation of the slave in Christ is hinted also by the word "redemption"; as justification is the acquittal of the accused, so redemption is the emancipation of the slave by purchase. It is not improbable that St. Paul was following up a saying of Jesus to which he no doubt alludes elsewhere: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (as a slave), and to give His life a ransom for many (slaves)." The greatest impetus to the elaboration of metaphors of emancipation by purchase came, however, from the custom of sacral manumission, which was widely spread in the ancient world, and which we have once more become acquainted with, thanks chiefly to inscriptions. Among the various legal forms by which in the time of St. Paul the manumission of a slave could take place, we find the solemn rite of purchase of the slave by a deity. The owner comes with the slave to the temple and sells him there to the god, and receives from the temple treasury the purchase money, which the slave has previously deposited there out of his savings. The slave thus becomes the property of the god, but as against all the world he is a free man.

'From this point of view, the words which twice occur in 1 Corinthians,

Ye were bought with a price,[1]

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23.

like the sentence in Galatians[1] about Christ redeeming them that were under the Law, become vividly intelligible, especially when we see that St. Paul uses formulæ that recur regularly in inscriptions relating to manumissions, and when we remember that among the people to whom St. Paul wrote there were slaves, who of course must have known all about that particular form of law. Having been freed through Christ (or "in"[2] Christ, as "in" the temple of the God) those who have hitherto been the slaves of sin, slaves of the Law, &c., are now slaves of Christ,[3] the property of Christ,[4] bondmen incorporate with Christ,[5] but otherwise free men,[6] who must not be made slaves again.[7][8]

It is the same with the metaphor of *adoption*. 'How clear and comforting must these words, and others like them[9]—"thou art no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir, through God"—have rung in the heart of a man of antiquity who, from the legal practice of the world in which he lived, was familiar with the testament in which the testator adopts some one as his son and makes him the heir.'[10]

We see then that the terms justification, adoption, sanctification, redemption and similar expressions do not stand in the Apostle's thought for different moments in the process of 'salvation,' but refer to different

[1] Gal. iv. 5. [2] Gal. ii. 4.
[3] Gal. i. 10; Eph. vi. 6, and other passages.
[4] Gal. iii. 29, v. 24; 1 Cor. i. 12, iii. 23, xv. 23; 2 Cor. x. 7.
[5] 1 Cor. xii. 27, &c. [6] Gal. v. 1 and 13.
[7] Gal. ii. 4, v. 1; 1 Cor. vii. 23.
[8] Deissmann, *St. Paul*, pp. 149–151. I am much indebted to this author for the light he has thrown on Paul's method of thinking, and free use has been made of his book in writing this chapter.
[9] Gal. iv. 7. [10] *Op. cit.*, p. 150.

aspects of the life 'in Christ,'—the life which is lived 'in the faith of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' This is not indeed the way in which these great words of Paul have usually been treated doctrinally; but Paul's aim was not doctrine, but the practical achievement of the life 'in Christ.' In the history of Christian thought these great expressions of Paul have more than once been the starting point of wonderfully complex and fruitful systems of doctrine, in the defence of which men have often resisted even unto martyrdom. The Apostle's interest, however, was in the reality behind the metaphor, in the life of faith of which his own life was so great an example. And what a field of experience he has thus left for us to explore and interpret, inviting us thereto not only by his own achievement in the world's history, but even more by the persuasiveness of his letters, so full of suggestion, and of invitation and promise in the name of the Master whom he so well served!

We thus see that Paul's ordinary lines of thought were perfectly simple and most direct. Where his thought became complex, and where it offers difficulty for modern readers, is where, in controversy, he resorts to Rabbinical method of argument, and to meeting his contemporaries on their own plane of thought. We have already given some instances of this more obscure type of thinking in our chapter on his mental equipment.

We may further illustrate Paul's method by considering a few of those practical subjects in which his attitude has been most misunderstood.

He has been regarded as unsympathetic and repressive in his views of the place and freedom of women. This opinion has arisen owing to a complete misunderstanding of the facts. What is not

realised is that among Paul's contemporaries the position of women in society was exceedingly low. To establish this fact it is only necessary to appeal to the Roman writers of the day.[1] It was not otherwise in the world of Judaism. Marriage was held in low esteem and divorce was common. Every Jew in his prayers thanked God daily that God had not made him a woman; and even the disciples of Jesus were astonished at his teaching on the sanctity of the marriage tie, and at his taking pains to hold serious converse with a woman.[2] Popular opinion and Rabbinical practice both condemned conversation between a Rabbi and a woman in public, not even one's wife being an exception.

In the new community difficult questions about the place of women were sure to arise, and Paul was called on to deal with them. In facing these questions he uniformly had regard to two factors. The ruling factor was that 'in Christ there can be neither male nor female.' All were one man 'in Jesus Christ.'[3] In an ideal sense all those who were 'in Christ,' the new society to which Paul gave the name of the Church, stood on the same level, equal in freedom and privilege. Their relation to one another was only limited by their natural gifts.

The second factor was the existing social conventions in the life of his time. As a practical man he could not ignore these. Even had he possessed the revolutionary wish to place woman on absolutely equal terms with man (which he had not), he could not possibly have realised it in the social conditions of his day. And so though the way he solved some of the

[1] See on this subject Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., chap. v.

[2] Matt. xix. 6–10.

[3] Gal. iii. 27–28.

problems presented to him may seem inadequate and repressive to us to-day, still it is most probable that to those of his own time it was wildly revolutionary. He legislated for the time. He believed the national catastrophe which would usher in the kingdom of Christ to be imminent. In view of that fact he thought that to marry was inexpedient. But he did not therefore despise or belittle the marriage union. On the contrary he set his face against divorce.[1] To him marriage was something sacred and mystical. It had elements of sameness with the union between Christ and the Church. The ideal that he placed before man was the highest possible. 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it.'[2]

The thought of a spiritual reverence for woman and of self-sacrifice for her welfare on the part of man was as revolutionary in those days as the aspirations of women for political life and freedom are to-day.[3] Much has been made of Paul's inhibition of women's speaking in public. To understand his problem one might suggest a parallel from the state of society in India. Not very long ago in good society in that country it was counted a shame for a woman to be able to read and write. Literacy was a mark only of the courtesan. Reform began slowly, but for an Indian lady fifty years ago to address a public meeting would have caused a riot. Yet to-day we find Indian ladies addressing the Indian National Congress. Had Paul been in India fifty years ago he would not have boldly advocated public speaking for women; but he would, in the circumstances of those days, have introduced that same principle of spiritual equality 'in Christ' between

[1] Cor. vii. 10. [2] Eph. v. 25.

[3] These words were written before the war.

man and woman, which as a matter of fact, working like leaven in society, is still gradually making impossible all forms of repression and ignorance both in the West and the East.

If Paul needs further justification in regard to his attitude to women, it may be pointed out that he had himself many women friends who did him valuable service, and that his prohibitory measures had not the value of universal application.[1] The natural inference is that Paul recommended that as a general rule, for his own day, a woman ought not to be prominent in her share in the public work of the Church, but if she possessed eminent gifts of the Spirit she should have opportunity to use them.[2]

Another problem which faced Paul was the question of slavery. He did not deduce from his experience of Christ that the custom of having slaves was wrong, and that therefore there were to be no slaves in a Christian household. That would be the modern method. But he insisted that the slave who was 'in Christ' was not merely a slave; he was a brother; and the moral attitude of Christians was to answer to that relation, and not merely to the relationship of property. In this way he introduced a principle not merely into the relationship of master and slave, but into the whole question of capital and labour, which is still leavening the world of labour, and is far yet from achieving the ideal. If it took eighteen centuries to effect the final liberation of the slave, how many years

[1] *Cf.* 1 Cor. xi. 4 ff.

[2] Swayne, *St. Paul and his Gospel*, p. 60. 'Not only did he endorse fundamental principles which necessarily led on to the honourable position which women have occupied in the most enlightened Christian communities, but he actually conceded to women in his own day a larger measure of freedom than is sometimes supposed.'

more will still elapse before the relationship of brotherhood 'in Christ' shall win out in the modern economic world?

Paul's method was to begin with the individual, and to trust to the effect of personality for the practical spread of his principle. Witness his wise dealing with Philemon on the subject of Onesimus.

Onesimus was a runaway slave. He had come under Paul's influence, and was now 'in Christ.' Paul sent him back with a characteristic letter to Philemon, his former master, a Christian.

In this letter he starts with the basal principle that Philemon, Onesimus, and he himself were now brothers 'in Christ.' So he can say to this owner of Onesimus: 'Though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech. I beseech thee for *my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds*, Onesimus, who was aforetime unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me; whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, *that is, my very heart* . . . for perhaps he was parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldst have him for ever; no longer as a bond-servant, but more than a bond-servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself.'[1]

'In Christ' Paul can identify the interest of his slave-convert with his own, and reckon on a new relation between master and man. His method was, not to run full tilt up against slavery as an evil thing to be got rid of by society at any cost, at once, but to introduce his new principle of 'faith' in Christ as a leaven which would eventually transform social values.

[1] *Cf.* Philemon, vv. 8–18.

Meanwhile the duties of the slave to his master are recognised in his general moral teaching.

Not a small or insignificant part of Paul's thinking was concerned with the collective idea of these who were 'in Christ.' In his mind those formed a very definite community over against the rest of the world. They were the saints, the Church of God, the body in whom Christ dwelt,[1] the dwelling-place of the Spirit of God, the body of whom Christ is the head, the habitation of God in the Spirit, the temple of God.[2] A remarkable line of thought is that in which the Apostle thinks of Christ as finding His completeness in the Church. The Church is the body in whom Christ dwells, and by means of which He carries His work of redemption in the world to completion. The goal will be reached only when Christ shall have become 'all in all'; when a complete union shall have been attained between Christ and His Church on earth. Moreover, in this ideal community there is manifested a particular type of moral life, leading on to moral perfection as its goal. Towards the close of each of his letters Paul usually emphasises the nature of this life in a series of magnificent moral precepts. Christians are 'to walk worthy of the calling wherewith they are called.' The root principle in this moral life is love. Love sanctifies all the relations of life, both individual and communal. To be 'in Christ,' as we have seen, transforms the ideas of marriage and slavery. It fulfils the basal principle of Jesus Himself, that men should love their neighbours as themselves, and has behind it all the moral force of the example and inspiration of the Master. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 13. [2] Eph. ii. 22; 1 Cor. iii. 16.

control.'[1] Here is a type of life which Paul never tire of describing and expounding to his 'babes in Christ.

What was Paul's thought of the future? Her more than in any other part of his thinking he wa the child of his times. In the circles in which h moved there was a very distinct and definite expectatio of the future, and in the main his Christian messag was given in terms of the ideas current around him We find an exactly similar basis for thought abou the future in Matthew's Gospel and in the Apocalypse The end of this present world is at hand. The So of God will appear from heaven. 'The Lord him self shall descend.'[2] In this and in similar passage we meet with elements drawn from the apocalypti literature of the day; and this line of thought include the idea of a last judgment by Christ,[3] the destructio of evil powers, victory over death, the Messiani reign of Christ begun, and the final consummatio of things, when Christ shall have handed back th kingdom to God, the Father.[4] The whole imager here is in terms of Jewish apocalyptic. But we als find another line of thought, which has more affinit with Greek thinking. In it the central interest i fixed on the idea of personal immortality. In writin to the Corinthians he introduces this new conceptio when he speaks of 'a spiritual body.'[5] The though of the coming of the Lord is thrown into the back ground, and the idea of spiritual communion wit Christ in another world becomes prominent. Th fellowship 'in Christ' on earth is to be perfecte 'with Christ' 'face to face'[6] in the world to come.

[1] Gal. v. 22–27.
[2] 1 Thess. iv. 16–17.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 10.
[4] 1 Cor. xv. 24 f.
[5] 1 Cor. xv. 51–52.
[6] 1 Thess. iv. 10; 2 Cor. xiii. 9; Phil. i. 23; Rom. viii. 32
[7] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

The man who is thus united to Christ will have divested himself of all that is fleshly and will have put on a spiritual body, like to the body of Christ Himself.[1] The soul of man is immortal, and its true home is heaven. 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.[2] Paul lived in a constant sense of the worthlessness of the things of this world, and of the transiency of human life and society. He found fixity and permanence only in the thought of the living Christ, and in life in Him. Christ's life is eternal, and those who were bound to Him in 'faith' share in His eternal life. Amidst all the flux of things this one certainty remained. He indeed clothed this fundamental hope in the language of his day; but the central fact can easily be distinguished from the drapery. 'The symbolism of the first century has now largely passed away, although we do use its language in Christian poetry without misgivings. The fundamental beliefs in resurrection, immortality, in judgment, and salvation, however, which we are taught through this symbolism, have become the permanent possession of the Christian Church.'[3]

[1] Cf. Phil. iii. 21. [2] 2 Cor. v. 1.
[3] Headlam, *St. Paul and Christianity*, p. 37.

Chapter VI: Paul and Modern Life

PAUL is pre-eminently the apostle of the reality of the spiritual life. He was very conscious in his own experience of a life that was supramundane, and constantly gave witness to the great superiority of this life of the spirit. He was thus able in an unparalleled way to convince men that the unseen was the real, and that the seen was temporal and of lesser value. His principle of 'faith' in Jesus Christ proved effective in bringing God and the things of the heavenly kingdom into the daily practical life of men, and enabled them to rise superior to the concerns of this world, anchoring them to a sure hope in the future. This divine-human life was of universal application. The simplicity and directness of his own experience of Christ commended Him to others. 'It secured for the souls of the many the gospel experience of God which had been in the possession of One, and it did so by anchoring these many souls in the Soul of the One.'[1]

In the history of Christianity, however, Paul has had quite another significance. He is the reputed father of Christian theology, and the founder of a complex ecclesiastical system. He has enriched Christianity with a whole series of fresh intellectual ideas on religion, and through these ideas he from time to time has given a powerful stimulus to thought and speculation.

He has also given a new outline and meaning to human history which has influenced all subsequent historical thinking, and was the author of certain

[1] Deissmann, *St. Paul*, p. 232.

ethical concepts and observations which have since been adopted into the universal moral code. These rules of conduct became finally operative in and through a very complex organisation which grew out of his simpler arrangements for the corporate life of his converts.

There is little doubt, however, that in the consciousness of modern Christians much is attributed to Paul both in the realms of thought and of organisation for which he is not really responsible. Much of the theology called Pauline does not represent the correlated thought of the Apostle, but is rather leading ideas culled from it, often disproportionately developed, and worked into the thought systems of other great thinkers. In this way Paul has stood sponsor for lines of thought and for doctrines that have tended to conceal his real significance. 'Some Paulinism (in this sense) is to be found among the teaching of the Gnostics; it was clearly the teaching of St. Paul which helped in the building up of the Augustinian theology; and once again at the Reformation its influence was exhibited through Luther and Calvin. In all these cases there was something disproportionate in its influence. It was not St. Paul's teaching which was reproduced, but certain special doctrines developed in a one-sided way.'[1]

In this way it cannot now be hidden that much of what has been called 'Pauline' in the technical language of theology and ecclesiology is in fact the work of later builders who have built extensively and complexly on the simpler foundations of the Apostle's thought and discipline. It is to be feared that in the magnificence and the abundant detail of the structure of 'Pauline' thought and system thus erected, the real

[1] Headlam, *St. Paul and Christianity*, pp. 205, 206.

greatness of the man and his message, his prophetic fire, his 'faith,' and his passion for men have been overshadowed, if not actually lost. Yet it is Paul, the man of 'faith,' and the prophet of the life of the spirit, and not the thinker or the ecclesiastic, who heralded forth the message whose adoption could change for us once more the face of the world.

For what the world needs is a clear and universal confidence of the superiority of the things of the spirit over the things of the flesh. The encouraging factor in modern life is the fact that such a confidence is already present in it, though it may be as yet largely implicit and inarticulate. For it may be claimed that in our political, social, and domestic life the value of love over hatred, or communal life over isolation, of the principle of brotherhood over that of the survival of the fittest, is being gradually recognised. The fact is that our Western civilisation is a harvest which has sprung from a great variety of seed. Tares and wheat grow side by side. Greek ideas of beauty and moderation; Roman principles of order, justice, and empire; mediæval elements of chivalry; and modern national enthusiasms have grown up together. Over against one another the barbaric taint and the gentle influence of the Man and of Peace have increased, and the time for selection has come. The whole world to-day is faced with the great choice, for Love or Hatred; for communal life or individual life; for universal brotherhood or a life based on force, the will to live; for the life of the spirit or the life of the flesh, for Christ or Self.[1]

The life of the spirit must needs be made more

[1] These words, written before the war, have received a signal illustration by the course of events since. The war has indeed brought the question here discussed into the forefront of men's consciousness, but everything still points to

explicit and articulate. This can only be done by the aid of religion, and can be done most efficiently by the religion of Jesus Christ. For all agree that in Him the life of the spirit has had its highest example. The problem is not one of imitation, but of an enthused co-operation. It is here that Paul's message is of value to the modern man.

Is the prophetic message of Paul true to fact? Did the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ actually introduce into the world of human experience a new era of spiritual power and achievement? Does the life of 'faith' connote something real and valuable in human experience?

The witness of history and of the consciousness of men answer in the affirmative. Few doubt that there is a Divine direction in the affairs of men and nations, that there is:

> 'One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.'

All true progress has been bound up with the deepening and universalising of this consciousness of a divine meaning and co-operation in human life Struggle and effort still remain. Remains too the constant antagonism of the selfish earth-centred life. But, whether implicit or explicit, the desire in the heart of humanity for the higher life is emerging into conscious endeavour. Science has brought all men together in a most marvellous fashion, and in this is the handmaid of religion. No man and no nation can any longer live to itself. Inter-communion and conscious co-operation touch the human race in every

the conclusion that many years must elapse before the Christian answer meets with universal acceptance.

interest of life. And men are feeling after a principle of living that will secure to them this new life on a better foundation than that of self-interest.[1]

'If I were asked to name Lord Roberts' highest intellectual quality I should say unhesitatingly that it was his instinct. And if I were asked to name his highest moral quality I should say, also unhesitatingly, that it was the unshakeable confidence with which he trusted his instinct. But the firmness of his trust was not due in the least to self-conceit, or arrogance, or obstinacy. He obeyed his instinct as he obeyed his conscience, humbly and devoutly. The dictates of both proceeded from the same source. It was not his own cleverness which led him to his conclusions, but the hand of providence which drew aside a veil and enabled him to see the truth. What gave him his great strength in counsel, as in the field, was the simple modesty of his confidence.' [2]

Contemporary life is full of similar examples of this confidence in one's 'instinct,' in faith in the 'better feelings' of men. But our study of the biography of Paul leads us to ask further if this is all that man can hope for in life. Is the confidence that Jesus Christ had in God unique, or cannot men enter into it and share His experience? The whole Christian experience of Paul suggests a very positive answer to this question. And this claim of Paul to share in this Divine life has been paralleled by similar claims all down the history of Christianity. Indeed it may be affirmed that all genuine Christianity implies the living of this life of 'faith' in Christ; but there are outstanding names whose testimony and achievement through 'faith' stand out as beacon lights in

[1] *Cf.* Swayne, *St. Paul and his Gospel*, p. 120.
[2] F. S. Oliver, *Ordeal by Battle*, p. 23.

history. St. Patrick, the Apostle of the Irish; Livingstone, the pioneer sociologist of Africa, are the names of two out of many who have walked through life 'in Christ,' and were strangely led to large service for humanity thereby.

> 'Christ protect me to-day,
> Against poison, against burning,
> Against drowning, against wound,
> That I may receive a multitude of rewards.
>
> Christ with me, Christ before me,
> Christ behind me, Christ within me,
> Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
> Christ at my right, Christ at my left,
> Christ in breadth, Christ in length, Christ in height.
> Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
> Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks to me,
> Christ in the eye of every man that sees me,
> Christ in the ear of every man that hears me.'[1]

It may be noted that the lives of these heroes of 'faith,' though centred in utter 'other-worldliness,' have resulted in the most positive social and religious gains for humanity. It may be claimed indeed that the universalising of this principle of life 'in Christ' would solve all our problems — social, economic, national, and international. The problem of slavery has already succumbed to it. Likewise as the leaven increases will the problems of social vice, drunkenness, the relations of capital and labour, the rivalry of religious sects, the jealous strain of national and international relations also vanish. An impracticable dream! Still it is the dream that Jesus Christ dreamt for humanity, for the realisation of which we all pray daily when we say 'Thy Kingdom come.'

[1] *The Breastplate of St. Patrick*, vv. 7, 8, 9.

All faith is a venture of the human soul. But hitherto only individuals have had courage to venture their all for God 'in Christ.' Suppose such a venture became universal. The tremendous problems of our generation would disappear almost automatically. Men, however, shrink from this venture. Even Christ was astonished at human unresponsiveness.

Pessimism is as rampant to-day as in the days of our Lord. Christ tarries long. Shall the Son of man find faith on the earth when He comes !

The witness of Paul is clear. His environment was inexpressibly less promising for the kingdom of God than ours is. He made the venture of faith, brought his message of faith into Europe, and changed European history. Faith will remove mountains. The energy is available. The human venture still tarries.

Appendix: Questions for Discussion in Study Circles

Part I: Chapter I

I. What is your aim and motive in studying Paul? 'Read him, and as you read, a greater than St. Paul will come unto you, interpret him, explain him.' What is meant by these words of Forbes Robinson?

II. Compare the adequacy and value of the materials at our disposal for a serious study of Paul with those we have for the study of Socrates and Cicero. Think especially of what we can learn of (*a*) his training and environment, (*b*) the external events of his life, (*c*) his inner history.

Chapter II

I. 'Paul was a citizen of the world.' Enumerate and explain the influences that came to him from outside, and estimate their value for his after life.

II. Contrast Paul's outlook on the world with that of a Stoic philosopher and that of a Roman imperialist.

III. Discuss Paul's attitude to idolatry. It is said that this was much more tolerant and gentle than we might have expected. What were the real enemies of the Church that he feared?

Chapter III

I. What was the strength and what the weakness of Paul's inheritance as a Jew? Can you suggest modern parallels? Is the inheritance of an Englishman, for instance, all gain to him as an administrator or missionary in Africa or India?

II. Did Paul's meeting with Jesus make it easier or harder for him to meet and share his life with men of other nationalities?

III. Can we trace any influence of Greek and pagan religious thought or practices in Paul's religious thinking and administration?

Chapter IV

I. In what way does Paul's life suggest that every man's life essentially consists of a process of selection and of rejection of the varieties of life and thought current in his day? Does greatness have any relation to this process, or to that new step forward into the unknown which we call originality?

II. Contrast Paul's method of thought with that of a modern theologian. Is the scientific method wholly gain to the latter?

Chapter V

I. Trace the evidence historical and psychological for the continued life of Jesus in the Christians of the first century. Show the difference, if any, between this influence and that of strong friendship or beneficent authority.

II. To what extent does modern Christianity preserve this mark of first-century Christianity? Is the continued life of Jesus less of a reality now than then? How far has Christ 'in' the individual in modern thought been replaced by recognition of Him as an influence in the community or in world-movements? What truth is there in the suggestion that in modern Christianity Christ has become depersonalised?

III. What value do you place on Paul's statement that he had 'seen' Jesus?

Part II: Chapter I

I. 'It is as a pastor that St. Paul is first and best known to us.' Explain this statement, and compare his methods as a pastor with those of a modern clergyman.

II. To what extent can we know a man through his letters? Mention any characteristics that mark off Paul's letters from the ordinary letters of everyday life.

III. From whence did Paul derive his great passion for the service of men?

Chapter II

I. 'These two conceptions—life in Christ, life in the Spirit—sum up the whole of our religious life, and they represent the same life viewed from different standpoints.' Illustrate this statement from Paul's experience and testimony.

II. 'The result of conversion is the harmony, peace, and unity of a previously divided and disordered personality.' How is this true of Paul?

III. 'To St. Paul God is rather an indwelling power of life than an external authority.' 'Do not make the same mistake that so many of the Jews in St. Paul's time did. Do not try to consider Law apart from the Law-giver.' Contrast Paul's attitude to law as a Jew and as a Christian. What does Christian freedom mean—emancipation from the control of law, or power to live within the law without irksome effort and the experience of defeat?

Chapter III

I. Indicate any advantages that Paul had as a missionary over modern missionaries. Also what disabilities did he labour under?

II. Contrast Paul's methods with modern missionary methods. How far could the methods of Paul be used to advantage in modern times? Was Paul's task different from the modern problem of missions?

III. Did not Paul always emphasise the power of personality rather than that of organisation? Is the modern reliance on organisation and method somewhat disproportionate?

Chapter IV

I. In what sense is Paul's thought theological? What was the ruling purpose in his thinking? Contrast this with the purpose of modern theologians.

II. What is meant by contemplative thought? Explain how inconsistencies may well have occurred in Paul's thought.

III. Analyse Paul's conception of 'faith.' Explain how 'faith' in Christ differs from any other kind of faith.

Chapter V

I. Contrast the way of the ascetic with the way of 'faith' in the search for God. Explain how the religion of Jesus tends to the growth of the soul by merging it in the personalities of others, thus leading to a perfectly social religion.

II. 'Christianity is not primarily the religion of the higher conception of God or of the higher morality, though actually it is both of these. It is the religion of a new power.' Explain.

III. Illustrate the similarity and difference of Jesus and Paul's use of the events of common everyday life to illustrate their teaching on spiritual things.

IV. Suggest how Paul's treatment of the problems of the place of women in society and of slavery could be applied to some of the more acute economic social and national problems of to-day.

Chapter VI

I. 'What the world needs to-day is leadership.' What can we learn of Paul to equip ourselves as leaders in the Christian life?

II. Has the modern influence of Paul in the Church been one-sided? Can you show if any of his essential message has tended to be overlooked?

III. Contrast the various current views of 'faith' with Paul's view. Also compare modern theories of the Church with Paul's theory so far as that is indicated in his letters.

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